

First quarter budget gap lower than expected

Rove's role diminished in revamp

Fashion designer, companion found dead inside car

Senators back GMA bid to kill death penalty

Customs runs after Tohs but admits no solid proof



By Armand N. Nocum and Cynthia D. Balana
CUSTOMS OFFICIALS have started to lower the boom on suspected big-time smugglers said to have links to First Gentleman Mike Arroyo

CUSTOMS/A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph



Friday, April 21, 2006

7 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 132 P18 website: www.inq7.net

2 Filipinos 'admitted' Saudi slays, says DFA

By Volk Contreras

TWO FILIPINOS ARRESTED IN JEDDAH, SAUDI Arabia, have "admitted" to killing three of their six compatriots who were earlier reported missing and whose disappearance coincided with the discovery of chopped-up body parts two weeks ago. The Department of Foreign Affairs last night said the two prime suspects implicated two more

2 FILIPINOS/A10

SC strikes down EO 464

Senators praise justices, claim win

By TJ Burgenio

PRAISE FROM THE SENATE YESTERDAY greeted the Supreme Court's ruling upholding Congress' right to compel the appearance of executive officials at its inquiries.

Senators who had locked horns with Malacañang over controversial Executive Order No. 464 of President Macapagal-Arroyo hailed the ruling as a sign of a working democracy and an independent judiciary.

They said it was both a vindication of the Senate, which had petitioned the high court to declare the order unconstitutional, and a slap on the Arroyo administration, which enforced it on Sept. 28, 2005.

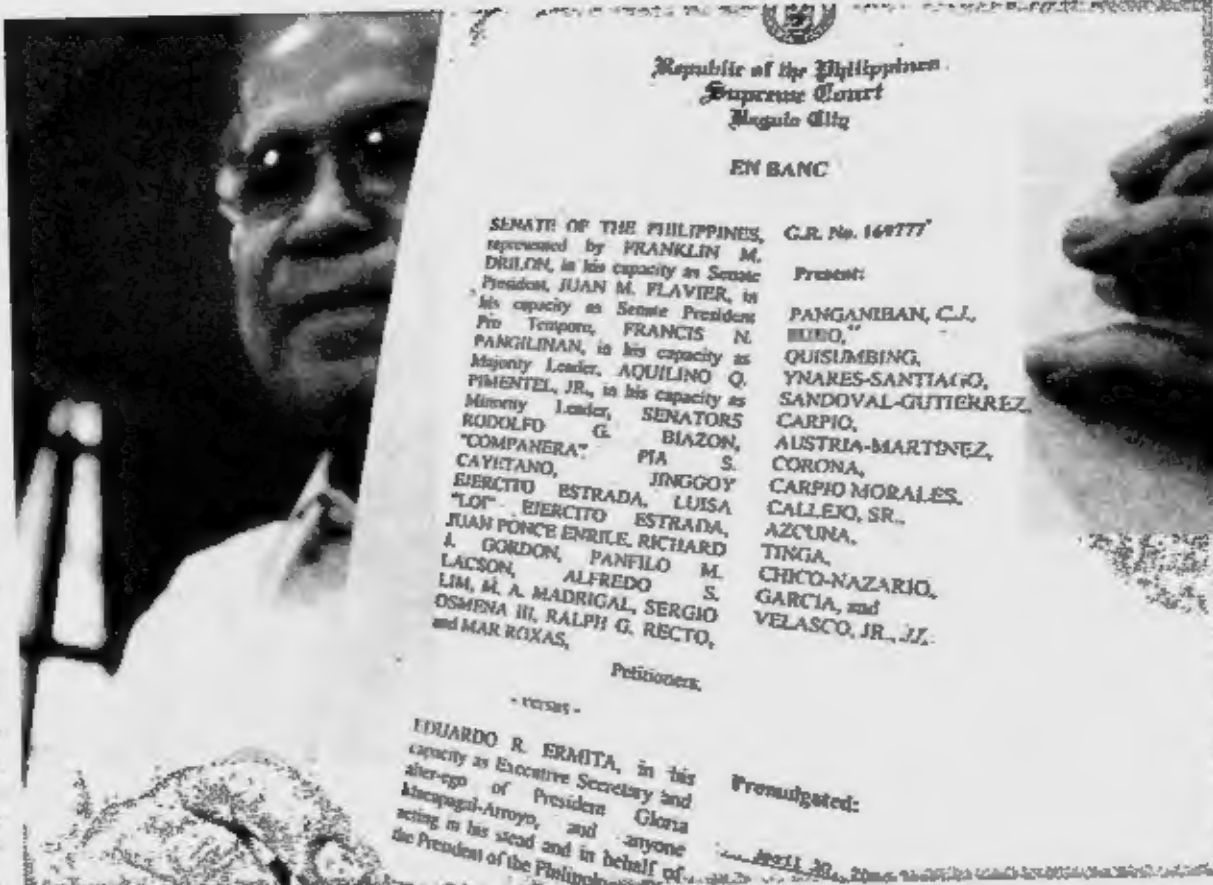
Members of the House majority said the ruling proved that democracy was at work in the country, and called on Malacañang to promptly abide by it.

Militant groups said it compensated for the purported negative impact of the tribunal's ruling on Wednesday upholding the unified identification card system being pushed by Malacañang.

But later, Sanlakas described it as a "pyrrhic victory."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the national defense committee inquiring into the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal, bluntly said: "I consider this a reprimand for the hasty adoption of controversial policies by the executive department."

SENATORS/A8



ISMAEL Khan, chief of the public information office of the Supreme Court, shows a copy of the high court decision declaring Executive Order No. 464 unconstitutional.

First 'casualties' of gag order feel vindicated

By Dona Pazibugan

THE FIRST "CASUALTIES" OF MALACAÑANG's gag order, otherwise known as Executive Order No. 464, welcomed the ruling of the Supreme Court.

Retired Marine Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Lt. Col. Alexander Balutan, who are facing court-martial for defying Executive Order No. 464 when they testi-

fied at a Senate inquiry into the "Hello Garci" scandal on Sept. 28, 2005, felt vindicated by the high court's ruling.

The scandal stemmed from wiretapped telephone conversations in which President Macapagal-Arroyo allegedly directed former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to rig the 2004 presidential election in her favor. Ms. Arroyo has denied any wrongdoing.

The lawyer of Gudani and Balutan said the Supreme Court affirmed their contention that EO 464 was illegal.

Malacañang issued EO 464 last Sept. 28 to preempt the testimonies of a number of military officials who had been summoned by the Senate earlier that day.

While the top brass obeyed Ms. Arroyo's verbal order to disregard the Sen-

FIRST/A6

High court votes 14-0 to uphold solons' right

By Armand N. Nocum and Christine O. Avedaño

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY upheld the right of lawmakers to compel the appearance of executive officials at congressional inquiries, and stressed that the issue involving Executive Order No. 464 pertained not only to Congress' right to know but also the people's right to take part in government affairs.

The tribunal voted 14-0. Associate Justice Reynato Puno is on leave.

But it declared constitutional President Macapagal-Arroyo's right to ban executive officials from appearing during the question hour in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

For over six months, the order banning the appearance of department heads and other officials of the executive branch at congressional investigations without the President's approval had put Malacañang on a collision course with the Senate.

For the full text of the decision, go to www.inq7.net/verbatim/sc_eo_464.pdf

It had been a major flash point for verbal skirmishes between the two independent, but supposedly collaborative, bodies.

EO 464 had been casually invoked by even low-ranking Cabinet and military officials in order to evade the Senate inquiries into the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal, the alleged P728-million fertilizer scam, the supposed overpriced \$503-million NorthRail project and Proclamation No. 1017, among other controversial issues.

The order was issued on the day then

SC STRIKES/A8

Rejection warning to Palace adventurers

By Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

MALACAÑANG APOLOGISTS HAD been singing "executive privilege" like a mantra.

Knowing some of them to be intelligent people, I really don't think I should believe that they believed what they were singing. The brazenness of Executive Order No.

464 was so obvious that even first year students in my Constitutional Law classes could already detect its fatal flaws.

The President, who is not a lawyer, was ill served by her advisers. For her own sake and for the sake of the nation, the President needs counselors who can stand up to dispute even her most strongly held convictions.

Lawyers throughout the country, on hearing about the Supreme Court decision, must have heaved a collective sigh of relief. After hearing or reading about the oral arguments before the Supreme Court, legal observers were awaiting, almost with bated breath, how the Court would resolve this major challenge from the executive department against sepa-

REJECTION/A6

Palace orders implementation of ID system

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY ordered the immediate implementation of the national identification card system a day after the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the project.

Malacañang executives want a national ID to be a mandatory requirement in

all government transactions and will encourage the private sector to require the same.

"President Arroyo has given the go-signal to the Cabinet to get the ID system in one form or another and this is the way we can keep up with the rest of the world," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael De-

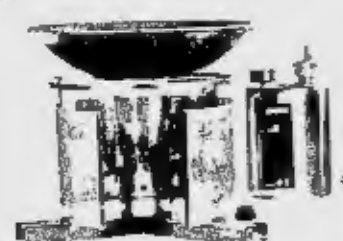
sensor said the ID system would be up and running in a few months. He said the National Economic and Development Authority, which would oversee the project, had been given less than 30 days to come up with its mechanics.

While Defensor said the databases of both the Social Security System and Government Service and Insurance

System would simply be merged, Neda chief Romulo Neri said the national ID system would include data from the Commission on Elections and PhilHealth.

Defensor explained that the goal was to synchronize all state-issued IDs with all citizens expected to have one

PALACE ORDERS/A21



PROTOS: Coconut oil, too

Stove fueled by 'tuba-tuba' launched in Leyte

By Vicente S. Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

BAYBAY, LEYTE—AN ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY cooking stove that uses coconut oil and other plant oils like those from the "tuba-tuba" or Jatropha is now being sold in Leyte.

The stove, called Protos, resembles a kerosene pressure stove and can also use kerosene. But its manufacturer, Bosch and Siemens Home Appliances Group (BSH), is pushing for the use of plant oils, which are cheap and environmentally friendly.

"The plant oil stove is easy to operate and offers a very safe cooking environment because plant oil can neither burn nor explode," said Dr. Elmar Stumpf, BSH plant oil stove project manager.

Sisino Balaga, 56, a resident of Baybay town and a user of the plant

STOVE/A30

Fil-Am starts LIFE, vows to plant 1M trees

By Blanche S. Rivera

SO MANY PEOPLE ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS and still end up without answers. One man, a Filipino-American, asked one question and found the path to life.

All Bienvenido Eusebio, 70, wanted to know three years ago was: "Are we being good stewards of God's creation?"

That one question brought him back home to the Philippines after 10 years in Indonesia and 30 years in the United States to launch the La Salle Institute for the Environment (LIFE).

LIFE, an institute with only five staff members, is now all set to plant a million trees that could spell the difference for the country's rapidly disappearing forests.

Eusebio, LIFE's volunteer executive director, will offer up a certificate bearing LIFE's pledge during a Mass by Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales to launch the Earth Day celebration at the former Smokey Mountain dump in Tondo, Manila, tomorrow.

De La Salle Philippines, through LIFE, has committed to plant a million trees by 2011, the educational institution's centennial anniversary in the country. The planting season starts in June.

"This can't happen overnight... but we think this is possible if everyone plants," said Eusebio, citing La Salle's more than 100,000 alumni and 50,000 students.

FIL-AM/A19



BIENVENIDO Eusebio (second from left) poses with LIFE staff and barangay officials in Lumban, Laguna. Behind them is Wawa Lake.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY GATE PEDRERO, PH RESEARCH/04/2006

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer_news@mailage.com or 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Bagyo	Partly Cloudy	Rosario	Partly Cloudy
Togogayana	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laos	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tugayog	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Laguna	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Senators back GMA bid vs death penalty

By Juliet Labog Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S MOVE TO ASK CONGRESS to pass a law to abolish the death penalty has gained the support of Senate leaders, even her most vehement critics.

Sen. Joker Arroyo said he intends to immediately convene the Senate justice committee to tackle the measure.

Arroyo, an administration senator who often positions himself against the President on certain issues, called on his Senate colleagues to support the President's policy to commute death sentences and repeal the Death Penalty Law even if some of them have called for her resignation.

"You cannot inject politics in everything that Gloria does. This is an issue that deserves bipartisan support," Arroyo said in a phone interview.

He rejected criticisms that the commutation policy was meant to court the support of the Church leaders who recently rejected the Malacañang-backed people's initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution.

A mother

"To the credit of Gloria, not one person was executed during her term. She is a woman, she is a mother," Arroyo said.

He also credited the President for giving Congress an opportunity to debate on a "more important issue."

"For once we will have a very serious and compelling issue for debate. There will be a great debate because I expect there will be others who want to retain the death penalty," Arroyo said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon and Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who strongly oppose Ms Arroyo's continued rule but are firmly against capital punishment, indicated they would support the repeal of the law.

House leaders who favor capital punishment, though dismayed by the President's

move to certify as urgent a consolidated House bill seeking to abolish capital punishment, felt bound to set the approval process in motion.

Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said House Bill 4826 had been approved on committee level and was in fact at the top of the House agenda even before Ms Arroyo made the announcement commuting all death sentences to life imprisonment in her Easter message last week.

Fast-tracked

"We will have it debated on the floor as soon as we resume sessions in May," said Nograles, adding that the bill's approval would be "fast-tracked."

The President on Wednesday announced that she had certified as urgent a House measure proposing the abolition of Republic Act 7659, the law passed in 1994 prescribing death for heinous crimes.

However, Nograles and another majority coalition leader, Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco, appealed to the President to reconsider her position on the death penalty, saying a majority of lawmakers still favored the retention of the RA 7659.

Nograles suggested that the death penalty be retained for two heinous crimes—drugs and terrorism.

"Drug lords and terrorists have caused so much havoc in this country and therefore they should be exempted" from executive commutation or from coverage by a law abolishing the death sentence, said Nograles.

"Personally, I would want drug lords to die by lethal injection because they are unforgiving to our youth and they destroy our

country," Nograles said.

Selective commutation

Cuenco said he respected the move of the President, "but the more cogent and judicious position should have been a selective commutation and not a general and wholesale one."

"If drug traders and rapists escape the death chamber and punishment during my lifetime, that would be most repulsive and objectionable that I would be jolted even in the afterlife," Cuenco said.

If the death penalty were to be abolished, Cuenco believes "Congress will revive it in due time."

Pimentel, the author of Senate Bill 1143 which seeks to impose 30 years' imprisonment instead of death on crimes covered by the Death Penalty Law, said he was "in full accord" with the President's conviction that convicted criminals must be given a chance to reform.

"If that is the President's intention, although we are not political allies, then she is on the right track on her plan to certify the bill," said Pimentel, adding that 15 other senators support his bill.

Drilon declined to comment on the President's action but said he was for the abolition of the death penalty and would continue to do so.

The anti-crime group Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption has vowed to take head-on the move to abolish the Death Penalty Law.

The 10,000-strong VACC, whose membership includes relatives of heinous crime victims, said it would go to Congress and beg lawmakers to defer the abolition of RA 7659.

"We will kneel down before them if necessary," said VACC founding chair Dante Jimenez.

The European Union and rights watchdog Amnesty International yesterday applauded the President's pledge to commute all death sentences. With a report from Tarra V. Quismundo and AFP



UNBURNED BOOTS

An Army soldier goes through assorted combat boots saved from the fire that gutted a building in the Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio early yesterday. The building caught fire at around 3:15 a.m. and arson investigators are still trying to determine the cause of the fire.

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-Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo

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S.E. Asian gov'ts asked to do more vs terror

CEBU CITY—SOUTHEAST ASIAN governments must do more to stop cross-border funding for terrorist groups, the head of the UN Security Council's committee on counterterrorism told an international antiterrorism forum here yesterday.

While most of these countries have put in place antiterrorism measures and financial intelligence units following the 9/11 attacks, there is slower progress in prosecuting those responsible, said Ellen Margrethe Løj, who is also Denmark's ambassador to the United Nations.

Intelligence agencies in the region now have an "appreciation of the ways in which funds from organized crime may be channeled to support terrorist organizations in a manner similar to that seen in other regions of the world," she said.

However, "progress has been much slower in relation to laws criminalizing the financing of terrorism," with more than half the countries failing to enact such laws.

Nearly half of the 10-member Association of South East Asian Nations have yet to ratify the international convention concerning the financing of terrorism.

"Even once this is done, one of the key challenges in this area will be responding to the ways in which terrorist organizations find new, unregulated ways of channeling funds," Løj said.

As financial institutions tighten their watch on suspect funds, terrorist groups could tap other means to move money, such as channeling funds through religious or charitable organizations, she said.

Løj did not give specific fig-



Løj: "Slow progress in prosecution"

ures as to how much laundered money actually gets into terrorist hands, but intelligence experts have said that Islamic mili-

tant groups in the region have been helping each other in funding.

President Macapagal-Arroyo,

in a message read by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, urged the 300-plus delegates from 60 countries to "keep terrorists at bay" and boost cooperation. She stressed they must also "find a middle way to address the socio-economic and political underpinnings of terrorism."

Al-Qaida mastermind Osama bin Laden is believed to have once used religious schools and Islamic relief organizations to hand over funds to Abu Sayyaf militants in Mindanao.

Philippine authorities have also arrested several Indonesian militants who confessed to being bagmen for the Jemaah Islamiyah operations in Mindanao, where officials believe they train with local rebels.

Former AFP Chief of Staff Benjamin Defensor said the three-day conference's main goal was

to find policies that address the causes of terrorism. He said delegates would also consider how developing countries might strike a balance between counterterrorism moves and protecting their cultures and religions.

East Timor Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, urged governments to strike a balance between fighting the scourge of terrorism and protecting civil liberties and human rights.

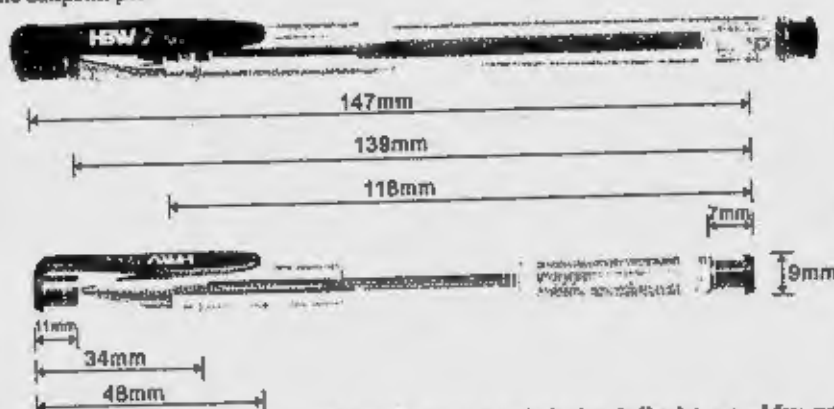
"We must not become monsters ourselves in order to defeat the monster, states must not sanction state terror to allegedly fight terror," he said.

"The superior morality of the rule of law, democratic and transparent government and respect for diversity are the most powerful weapons against extremism and intolerance."

WARNING TO THE PUBLIC

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Correction

ON PAGE A7 of the Inquirer's April 13 issue, Associate Justice Salvador Valdez was erroneously reported as having penned a Supreme Court decision suspending Judge Alfredo Kallos of Regional Trial Court Branch 10 for brokering a real estate deal. The decision was penned by Justice Antonio Carpio of the Supreme Court's 3rd Division. Associate Justice Valdez (now retired) handled the case at the Court of Appeals. In the Supreme Court, the case was resolved by the 3rd Division, not the 2nd Division.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, China-Roxas Avenue corner Magsaysay Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94

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137. ZIGA-GARCIA, Olanio Valeria V.

The new Arellano lawyers will be feted in a testimonial celebration on Saturday, May 6, 2006 after the Thanksgiving Mass at 4:00 p.m. at the Arellano Law Complex along Tayt Avenue corner Maria Street. R.S.V.P. Amy Montalegre, Telephone No. 404-3089 Local 31

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Rejection warning to Palace adventurers

From page A1

ration of powers and the public's right to know. Now they can breathe easy.

Before this, I myself was wondering what would be the substance of my conversation with Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban when he comes to the Ateneo Law School as graduation speaker on Sunday. I am now sure that he will be received most warmly by the Ateneo administration, faculty and law graduates.

I find the decision particularly gratifying coming, as it does, at a time when the executive department is openly defying a Supreme Court decision declaring that initiative and referendum cannot yet be used to propose a constitutional amendment because Congress has not yet passed an enabling law.

Warning to adventurers

The rejection of EO 464 should serve as a warning to executive department adventurers.

Most certainly, the issue of initiative and referendum will reach the Supreme Court. The Court will surely be asked to rule on whether the current signature campaign violates the Constitution, whether the Commission on Elections is defying the Supreme Court's injunction against it by taking cognizance of the signature campaign, and whether the change from a presidential to a parliamentary form of govern-

ment is a revision or merely a collection of plural amendments, as the creative constitutionalism of the secretary of justice suggests.

But even before petitions on initiative and referendum reach the Court, there are still other issues awaiting resolution.

Proclamation 1017, CPR

The Court still has to decide a number of major challenges to what is perceived by many as executive abuse. Did the President try to deftly sidestep the 2004 decision on the import of a declaration of a "state of rebellion" by declaring instead a "state of emergency"?

Did the President and her law enforcers, relying on Proclamation No. 1017, arrogate powers violative of constitutional rights? Is the policy of "calibrated preventive response" a violation of the right to assembly and petition? These are issues which test the limits of presidential power.

In an earlier column I wrote about the Court as a "legitimizing" in the darker pages of the history of our nation, there were lamentable instances when the Supreme Court gave its blessing to official action of- fensive to human rights and disruptive of constitutional-ism.

As we continue to struggle to rebuild our democratic structures, the decision on EO 464 is a most welcome refreshing and invigorating breeze.

First 'casualties' of gag order feel vindicated

From page A1

ate summons, Gudani and Balutan went on to testify on irregularities in the elections in Lanao del Sur.

The two were promptly relieved of their posts as Philippine Military Academy assistant superintendent and deputy cadet corps commandant, respectively.

Article of War 65

They were also ordered to face court-martial proceedings for violating Article of War 65, which punishes the willful disobedience of a superior officer.

"The decision paves the way for the quick dismissal of the complaints against them (Gudani and Balutan). Justice has been truly served," lawyer Napoleon Poblador said upon learning of the high court's decision.

Poblador said his clients had petitioned the tribunal to stop the court-martial proceedings because "the basis is an order that is unconstitutional and illegal."

The case is in the pre-trial investigation stage.

First Gentleman

Gudani, who was commander of the 1st Marine Brigade based in Marawi City during the elections, testified that First Gentleman Juan Miguel Arroyo had distributed P500 million in Mindanao.

Gudani retired on Oct. 4.

Balutan, who was a battalion commander under Gudani during the elections, testified he was told to relax security during the crucial canvassing of votes after Gudani was inexplicably relieved as brigade commander.

Balutan, who is known within the elite Marine Corps as "Mandirigma" (Warrior) for his bravery in combat, has been in the "freer" since Sept. 28.

A military spokesperson said the Supreme Court decision would not affect Gudani and Balutan's case because the two were charged with defying a direct order from the chief of



RETIRE Brig. Gen. Francisco V. Gudani (right) and Col. Alexander F. Balutan testified before a Senate investigation on Sept. 28, 2005. PHOTOFOTO

staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"They were not charged for [defying] EO 464 but for defying a direct order from Gen. Generoso Senga. That's disobedience. So that's a different case," Maj. Gen. Jose Honrado said.

Honrado said the AFP would ask for the de-

fense department's "interpretation" of the high court's ruling on EO 464 should officials be summoned to congressional hearings.

"If there is no legal constraint we have no choice but to follow [the congressional summons]. But it will be the DND [Department of National Defense] that will decide on that," he said.

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CUSTOMS Commissioner Napoleon Morales, along with RATS Executive Director Reynaldo Umali (left) and Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, files before the justice department criminal charges against some 33 members of an alleged smuggling syndicate. NPA/AMORA

Customs runs after Tohs but admits no solid proof

From page A1

although they admitted they had no solid evidence against them, yet.

Commissioner Napoleon L. Morales told reporters yesterday that the Bureau of Customs had closed down customs bonded warehouses owned by Vicky Toh and had started a "100-percent examination" of all importations made by Lucio Lao Co.

Toh and Co, along with Samuel Lee, were alleged to be among the country's top smugglers during a recent Senate hearing. All three were said to be close to Arroyo, who has denied the claim.

"As far as the Tohs are concerned, we found that of the companies put up under their names, some remained dormant for three years now, so we closed them down... lest they be used for smuggling activities," Morales said.

Investigations continuing

Morales stressed that the investigation of the Tohs was continuing. He said the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the National Bureau of Investigation were involved in the effort.

He said the bureau had strictly inspected Co's goods under its "enhanced post entry audit."

"We are conducting 100-percent examination on all his importations," he said. He added that his men were also "checking on the issue of misdeclaration and undervaluation" allegedly committed by Co.

Asked if the bureau had solid evidence against Co, Morales replied: "For now nothing yet, but now that the BOC has been alerted to it, all shipments consigned

to Co are being examined 100 percent."

The CIDG has charged Lee with smuggling while the Bureau of Internal Revenue has charged him with tax evasion, although Morales admitted that they did not have the goods on Toh and Co yet.

The two have been accused of engaging in activities involving "technical smuggling, misclassification and undervaluation" of imported goods.

No case on basis of hearsay

"We cannot file cases on the basis of mere hearsay," said Morales at the news conference called to announce that the bureau's Run After Smugglers (RATS) program had filed its 14th smuggling case before the DOJ.

Yesterday, RATS agents charged several officials of One Logistics Inc., JPC Customs Brokerage, Options Logistics, Acestar International Service Corp., KSN Air and Sea Freight Co. Inc. and JBN Trucking with the smuggling of 15 containers of plastic resin in January 2006.

Tax evasion case

Also yesterday, the Bureau of Internal Revenue filed its 54th tax evasion case since the RATS program was launched in 2004. The case involved the nonpayment of P8.3 million allegedly since 2003.

Charged before the Department of Justice were two top executives of Padocan Stainless Steel Corp., Gerald Chan and Nenka Chan, president and treasurer, respectively, of PSSC.

PSSC is engaged in the manufacture, import, export, buying and selling of fabrication steel, stainless brass, zinc, aluminum and other metal alloys.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said PSSC had continued to operate although it had filed a letter of closure and cessation of business operations. Termination of the business took effect on June 5, 2002.

Buñag expressed confidence that the BIR would be able to meet its April tax collection target, and eventually its 2006 target of P675 billion.

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Senators told to step on the gas on biofuels

By Philip C. Tubeza

"STEP ON THE GAS," BUKIDNON REP JUAN Miguel Zubiri yesterday urged senators in asking them to immediately pass the proposed Biofuels Act.

In calling for quick action, Zubiri, principal author of the House version of the measure, said the country was in danger of losing one-fourth of its current gas supply from the Middle East because the row between the United States and Iran over the latter's nuclear program could erupt into a war.

He pointed out that the United Nations Security Council was considering slapping an embargo on Iran, which supplied "one in every four barrels of oil that enter into our country."

Iran's 24.6 percent share of the Philippines' country's annual oil imports is second only to Saudi Arabia's 56.3 percent. If there's an embargo against Iran, we will be having a hard time finding an alternative supplier," Zubiri said in a statement.

Hostage to turmoil

"We cannot forever be held hostage to turmoil and upheavals in the volatile Middle East. We cannot tie our country's fate to that region," he added.

The Senate is expected to hold debates on the proposed Biofuels Act after Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago sponsors it on the floor.

Zubiri said enactment of the measure would also be a signal to "at least a dozen investors" who were prepared to plunk in "billions of pesos" for factories that produced fuel out of plants. "The players are just waiting in the wings and are ready to go in once the regulatory framework is in place," he said.

Citing a report of the Biofuel Alliance, Zubiri said six firms were in the "exploratory stage of venturing into ethanol projects."

The report identified the firms as Alcantara and Sons, Chemphil Group, Marubeni, the Teves Group of Negros Oriental, NU3 Food based in La Carlota City, Negros Oriental, the one in Pampanaga led by the Cobarrubias family, and the Passi, Iloilo consortium of sugar planters.

"In addition, a foreign group, two sugar centrals, and two companies that would like to manufacture coconut-based biodiesel are also interested," he said.

"What would nudge them to throw their hat into the ring is the approval of the Senate of the biofuels bill and its eventual signing into law," he added.

Zubiri said that if the two companies decided to invest in biofuels, they "would join two early birds—the San Carlos ethanol plant and another one in sugar-growing Bukidnon."

Zubiri said an ethanol plant cost P15 billion to build, "and this explains the wait-and-see attitude of interested companies, which naturally would like to see a favorable investment terrain before they take the plunge."

Raft of perks

Zubiri said the bill offered investors "a raft of perks, including tax privileges, to those interested in making cheap, clean, VAT-free gas out of cane and coconut."

He said the bill would seek to replace within four years a tenth of the national gasoline consumption with ethanol.

This would start with the "mandatory blending of gasoline with five percent bioethanol" within two years after enactment of the law.

He added that this would lead to annual foreign exchange savings of P40 billion, Zubiri said an estimate based on the country's daily consumption of 320,000 barrels of oil, "at \$65 a piece, using a P53 to US1 exchange rate."

He added that the country had enough land planted to crops that could guarantee a steady supply of biofuel.

"We have the means to ride on the alternative fuels boom. We have 2.4 million hectares planted to corn, 3.2 million hectares to coconut, 390,000 hectares to sugarcane, 330,000 to cassava and camote (sweet potato)," Zubiri said.

However, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said developing alternative fuels would not be "enough to solve the country's energy problems."

"Contingency measures—that's how Malacañang plans to solve our deep energy problems. But there are simply no stopgaps for our oil crisis," Ocampo said.

"What we need is to repeal the failed Oil Deregulation Law, take matters in our own hands by buying back Petron, and controlling both petroleum prices and distribution," he added.

"What we are really up against are the questionable pricing practices of big and greedy oil companies like Royal Dutch Shell, ChevronTexaco-owned Caltex, and Exxon-Mobil. They jack up prices and distress our economy whenever they wish," Ocampo said.

Feds release Mancao from Florida detention

FORMER POLICE SENIOR SUPT. Cesar Mancao was released yesterday, a week after US federal agents arrested him at his Florida home as a material witness in the espionage case against his former colleague, Michael Ray Aquino.

An ANC report said Mancao, whose case has been attended to by

Philippine consulate officials, has been allowed to leave the Federal Detention Center in North Miami Beach.

An earlier report said he was expected to be released on a \$575,000 bail bond but it could not be immediately confirmed if indeed he was released on bail and who paid for the

bond.

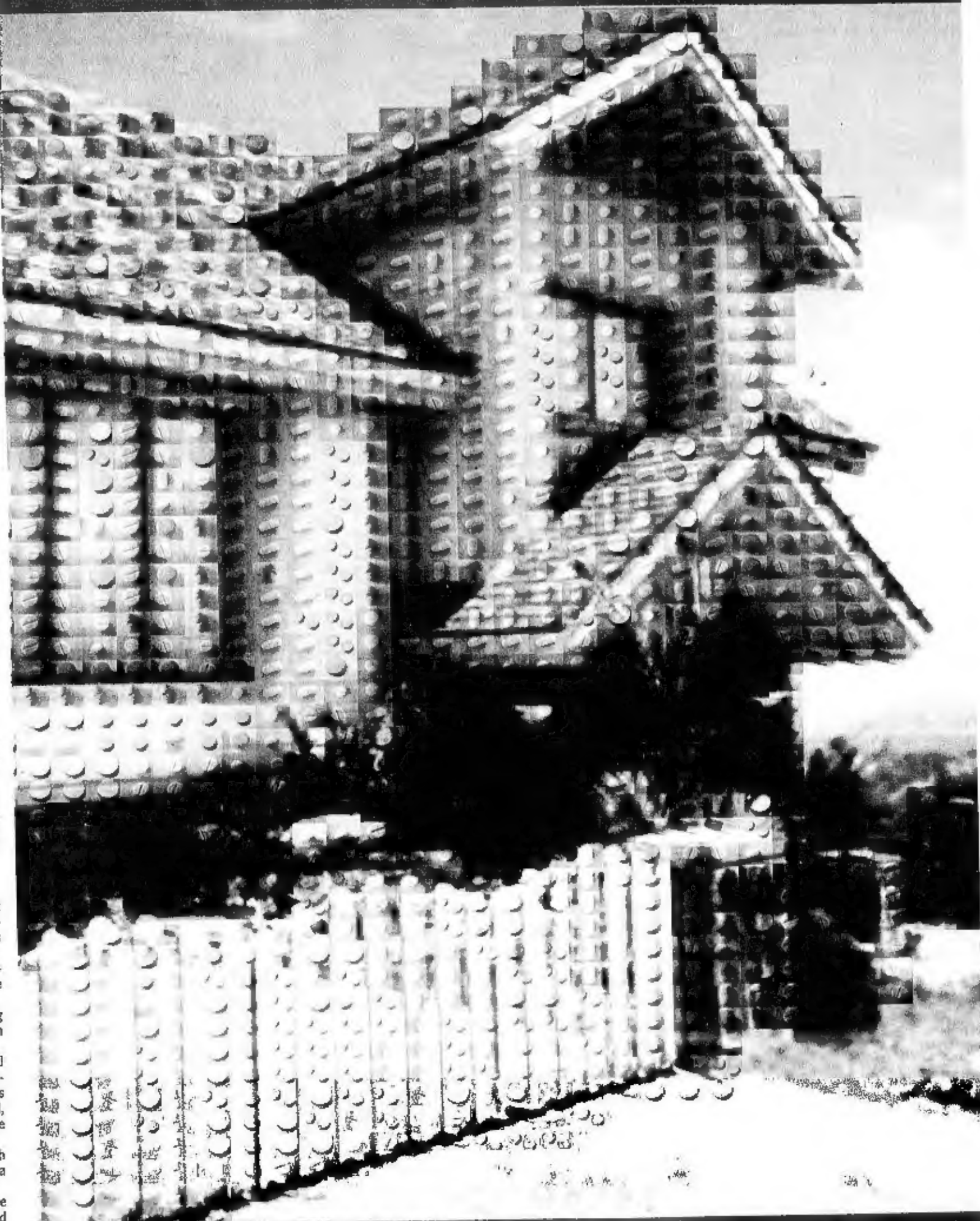
Mancao was arrested April 13 at this Florida home as a key witness in the case against Aquino and former FBI analyst Leandro Aragoncillo, whose case is being heard in New Jersey.

The two men were close aides of then Philippine National Police and now

Sen. Panfilo Lacson. They were also linked to the double murder of public relations man Bubby Dacer and his driver.

"I'm OK. It's been a gruelling experience," he told ANC, saying he would make no further comment until the resolution of his case.

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SC strikes down EO 464

From page A1

Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Alexander Balutan testified before Sen. Rodolfo Biazon's national defense committee on alleged election cheating in Mindanao.

The two officers' appearance at the inquiry prompted the initiation of court-martial proceedings against them.

The following groups had petitioned to have EO 464 declared unconstitutional: 17 senators led by Senate President Franklin Drilon; party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Crispin Beltran, Liza Maza, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador; Courage, the alliance of government employees, and a group of lawyers called Counselors for the Defense of Liberties.

Former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez filed a separate petition assailing the legality of EO 464.

Appeal possible

Hours before the ruling was officially released, Malacañang said it respected and accepted it but might seek an appeal.

"We hope, however, that it will not be taken by certain members of Congress as a license to use their power to conduct inquiries as an avenue to harass public officials or to push a particular political agenda, as we have seen in the past," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

"We hope further that Congress' time is put to better use to finally approving the budget and working on other urgent legislation that have long been on the table, like the antiterror and ethanol bills," he said.

Michael Defensor, the President's chief of staff, said Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura would study the possibility of an appeal.

Defensor also said he did not think the government had lost with the ruling.

He said that through EO 464, the executive branch was able to "deliver its message" to the Senate



SUPREME Court justices in session

and to the people: That the government would "not allow" members of the Cabinet to be "pilloried, embarrassed and insulted in the guise of an investigation which is actually a political witch-hunt."

Actually, he added, all members of the executive branch, including middle managers, should not be treated shabbily by lawmakers.

'Impermissible'

In the ruling written by Associate Justice Conchita Carpio Morales, the high court described as "impermissible" the act of the President using EO 464 to deny Congress the right to conduct inquiries in aid of legislation.

"Resort to any means then by

which officials of the executive branch could refuse to divulge information cannot be presumed valid," the tribunal said.

"Otherwise, we shall not have merely nullified the power of our legislature to inquire into the operations of government, but we shall have given up something of much greater value—our right as [a] people to take part in government," it said.

The 52-page ruling started thus: "A transparent government is one of the hallmarks of a truly republican state."

"Wherefore, the petitions are partly granted," the court said of its ruling declaring void Sections 2(b) and 3, which justify the ban on con-

gressional appearances by top government officials under the "rule of confidentiality" and the "separation of powers under the Constitution."

The ban covers senior officials of the executive departments; generals, flag officers and other officers of the Armed Forces; Philippine National Police officials and other officials deemed covered by EO 464.

In ruling that Congress could compel these officials to testify in inquiries in aid of legislation, the high court said: "Congress undoubtedly has a right of information from the executive branch whenever it is sought in aid of legislation."

And if the Palace decides to "withhold such information on

Voided provisions of EO 464

SECTION 3. Appearance of Other Public Officials Before Congress.—All public officials enumerated in Section 2 (b) hereof shall secure prior consent of the President prior to appearing before either House of Congress to ensure the observance of the principle of separation of powers, adherence to the rule on executive privilege and respect for the rights of public officials appearing in inquiries in aid of legislation.

Section 2b. Who are covered by executive privilege:

• Senior officials of executive departments who in the judgment of the department

heads, generals and flag officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and such other officers who in the judgment of the Chief of Staff are covered by the executive privilege;

• Philippine National Police (PNP) officers with rank of chief superintendent or higher and such other officers who in the judgment of the Chief of the PNP are covered by the executive privilege;

• Senior national security officials who in the judgment of the National Security Adviser are covered by the executive privilege; and

• Such other officers as may be determined by the President.

the ground that it is privileged, it must so assert it and state the reason therefore and why it must be respected," the tribunal said.

Question hour

On the matter of the question hour, the tribunal said the President was within her right to give prior consent to officials appearing therein.

It said the question hour did not relate to specific legislation but to congressional oversight relative to the implementation of laws.

"When Congress merely seeks to be informed on how department heads are implementing the statutes which it has issued, its right to such information is not as imperative as that of the President to whom, as Chief Executive, such department heads must give report of their performance as a matter of duty," the high court said.

And in keeping with the principle of the separation of powers, the high court said that in the question hour, Congress may only "request" the presence of top government officials.

In congressional hearings in aid of legislation, however, "the appearance is mandatory," it said.

Objective analysis

Thus, Section 1 and 2(a) covering such appearances are "valid," it added.

Defensor said that with EO 464 deemed unconstitutional, "members of the Cabinet will have to react accordingly based on our individual and objective analysis of the situation."

"If and when [a congressional inquiry] becomes a political witch-hunt, it will become an individual responsibility and accountability of each member not to attend if they so desire, or to attend if they feel they should," he told reporters.

"For example," Defensor added, "if the agriculture or agrarian reform secretary feels that [an inquiry] has become a political witch-hunt and he or she decides not to attend, that is his or her own lookout."

Defensor said that as far as he was concerned, "I would have no second thoughts about standing up and walking out [of an inquiry], and if they would have me arrested, that's their prerogative."

But he made it clear that the Palace did not want an "institutional war."

He also said the Palace was prompted to issue EO 464 because members of the Cabinet had felt at the time that the Senate was out to conduct a political witch-hunt when it announced it would continue its investigation of alleged cheating during the 2004 presidential election.

Senators praise justices, claim win

From page A1

And Sen. Joker Arroyo, who had orally argued the Senate's case against a battery of government lawyers, described the ruling as "predictable."

He said the high court could not have allowed the co-equality and the delicate balance of power between the President and Congress to be "impaired," or the "immutable doctrine of separation of powers and checks and balances so essential in our structure of government" to be "upset."

"Had the Supreme Court sustained the President, it would have ushered in a quasi-dictatorial presidency," the administration senator said in a statement.

The President tried, the Senate opposed, the House stood idly by and the Supreme Court did its bounden duty," he said.

Victory

"This is a victory for the Senate," declared Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan.

"This affirms our power to conduct inquiries and compel Cabinet and other government officials to appear in our inquiries in aid of legislation," he said in a phone interview.

He added: "They can no longer invoke EO 464 when we issue subpoenas to them to appear in inquiries in aid of legislation."

Pangilinan downplayed the high court's declaration that Cabinet officials were barred from

appearing at the question hour and that the President could invoke executive privilege.

He said the senators had never questioned these points.

"The upholding by the tribunal of Sections 1 and 2-A of EO 464 is not an issue considering that these sections are mere reiterations of a provision of the Constitution on the question hour and of the [high court's] rulings on executive privilege," he said.

"What was at issue," he said, was "the power of the legislature to compel Cabinet secretaries and other members of the executive branch to appear in hearings in aid of legislation under Section 21 Article 6 of the Constitution."

Confidence

Pangilinan and Senate President Franklin Drilon also lauded the tribunal for its ruling.

"It affirms our confidence in our judicial system. It is proof that Malacañang acted beyond the confines of the Constitution and must be made to account for its illegal act," Pangilinan later said in a statement.

"This decision validates the Senate's position that as an institution, we have the constitutional duty to act as a check on a wayward executive branch," he said.

In a statement, Drilon pointed out that the "patently and brazenly unconstitutional" EO would have been "disastrous to our democratic system."

"Indeed, I am glad that we have a Supreme Court that is pre-

pared to uphold the Constitution at all times. I certainly appreciate [its] independence," he said.

"This decision should remind Malacañang that ours is still a government of laws and not of men. It should make the President realize that she cannot overstep constitutional boundaries, specifically those provided under the principle of separation of powers between branches of government, just to suit her personal agenda," he said.

Bad news for GMA

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said in a text message that the ruling brought "glad tidings" for the people and "bad news" for the President.

"It means that not all [Ms Arroyo] wants, she gets," Pimentel said, adding:

"She can't supplant Congress by issuing administrative and executive orders. The ruling should make her mature into the presidency, not only grow old in it."

Sen. Ralph Recto said the ruling stopped Malacañang from imposing "capital punishment" on the Senate.

"What has been made clear is that a constitutional branch can't be exterminated by a mere executive fiat," Recto said.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the President "should fire her legal advisers and whoever counseled her into believing that EO 464 is not constitutionally infirm."

Biazon said the ruling "is giving us hope that the institutions

and institutional processes are still working."

"We can still rely on the Independence of the Supreme Court to resolve constitutional issues," he said in an interview.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. made a similar comment: "The enlightened ruling of the Supreme Court proves to everyone that [it is] still independent of Malacañang. The people's trust and confidence in the judiciary will surely be reinforced because of this."

Lacson said the tribunal acted judiciously and with unanimity on the matter. He said each justice should be commended.

'Continuing game'

But Wilson Portaleza, leader of the militant group Saniakas, said the ruling was a "pyrrhic victory."

"A win-win formula usually connotes compromises. I don't know if lawmakers are satisfied with this. If so, it must be just part of the continuing political game," he said.

According to Portaleza, Malacañang knew that EO 464 had no legal basis.

"Sadly, the [high court's] decision came late and the EO has already served its purpose. The challenge now for the Senate is to demand retribution for the injury," he said.

Initially, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said the tribunal's ruling would once again make legislative inquiries effective in uncovering the truth.

Said Reyes: "The score is now 1-1 for the petitioners. We lost the ID system case but it appears we won in the EO 464 case. The junking of EO 464 means a roadblock to truth-seeking has been removed."

But later, he said: "If the ban on Cabinet officials stays, the decision will have no teeth. It would be less effective."

He said the high court might only be trying to appease the public while still providing a degree of protection to the executive department.

"Our faith in the Supreme Court hangs in the balance because there are cases still to be decided. We lost in the ID system case and are unsure about [how the tribunal would decide on the calibrated preemptive response policy and Proclamation No. 1017, which imposed a week-long state of emergency in February]," Reyes said.

'Don't gloat'

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles warned senators not to "gloat or abuse their investigative powers."

"I respect the tribunal's decision. The entire Congress welcomes it," he said in a phone interview.

According to Nograles, a lawyer, the ruling "upholds the inherent powers of Congress to check the executive department, and gives Congress every means available to summon witnesses, resource persons, etc."

He said this had been the majority's position on congressional investigations, "so long as this power is not abused by Congress itself and the rights of persons are respected."

Nograles declined to comment on the specifics of the ruling, but said Malacañang could seek a reconsideration or have "some legal slips corrected."

"Meanwhile, I rejoice over the sign of [the tribunal's] independence," he said. He called on senators not to abuse congressional inquiries "but instead act on pending bills" such as the General Appropriations Act and the antiterror bill.

'Win-win' solution

In a joint statement, Representatives Benasag Macarambon (NPC, Lanao del Sur), and Monico Puentevela (Lakas, Bacolod City) welcomed the ruling, expressing hope that this could provide a "win-win" solution to the raging issue.

But Antique Rep. Ezequiel Javier expressed the fear that the high court decision would "spell open season once again for the Senate to engage in investigative witch-hunts in aid of partisan politicking."

Macarambon said EO 464 was a reaction to Senate witch-hunts that were compromising the country's national security and its image abroad.

"We call on senators not to abuse their investigative powers for partisan political gain," he said. With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

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Erap contradicted self in trial, Chavit claims

ILOCOS SUR GOVERNOR LUIS "CHAVIT" Singson said yesterday that former President Joseph Estrada contradicted himself when he admitted in court this week that a son received a P1.2-million check from Singson as a birthday gift and denied it was meant to buy a P13-million necklace for his mistress Larni Enriquez.

Singson pointed out in a statement that Estrada had claimed earlier that the check was payment for money owed Enriquez, who is known to be a jeweler.

Singson said Estrada, through his court-appointed lawyer Prospero Crescini, had told the court during the earlier stages of the five-year-old trial that the Ilocos Sur governor had purchased a diamond ring from Enriquez for a certain Rachel Tiongson.

"Court records will bear me out on this," Singson said. "By issuing contradicting versions in his testimony, he is digging ... his own grave."

Singson insisted that, as he had testified in a 2002 hearing, the P1.2-million check was his "contribution" for a P13-million diamond necklace that Estrada's gambling cronies gave to the former movie starlet as a present. The suggestion to pass the hat around, he said, came from businessman Mark Jimenez.

Singson said the check was from his Metrobank account that supposedly contained Estrada's payola collections from jueteng lords. He said he issued the check against that same account because he felt that the P1.2 million contribution toward a gift for Enriquez was too much.

Then Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, in the same 2002 hearing, said the check ended up being deposited in Enriquez's account with a Philippine Savings Bank's branch in Murphy, Quezon City.

In his testimony last Wednesday, Estrada said that of the P1.2 million gift from his erstwhile gambling buddy, P1 million went to Jacob, Estrada's son by Enriquez and Singson's godson; and the balance of P200,000 was divided between Jacob's two siblings.

"I was surprised. I didn't know why the amount was that big. Probably he just wanted to ingratiate himself," Estrada said of the check from Singson.

He said it could not have been a gift for Enriquez as her birthday falls on Sept. 22 whereas the check was issued on Dec. 22, 1999.

Estrada said he had never seen that check and found out about it only after Enriquez told him about it.

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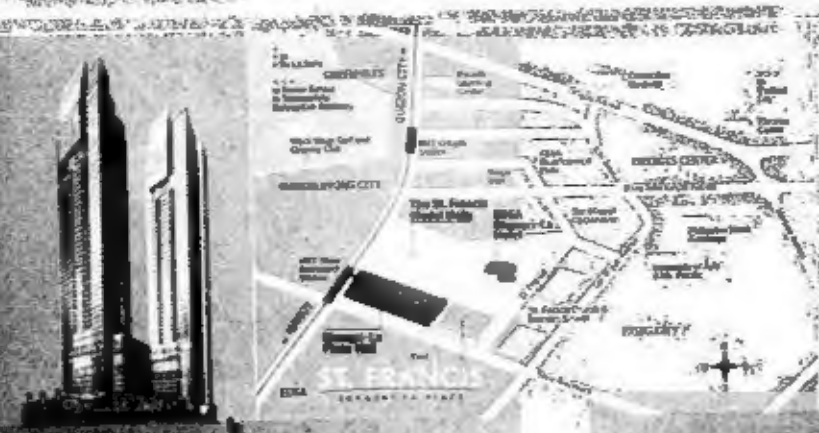
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THE DAILY GOSPEL



Friday, April 21, 2006
Octave of Easter, Friday

1st Reading: Acts 4:1-12
Gospel: Jn 21:1-14

Jesus revealed himself to the disciples by the Lake of Tiberias. He appeared to them in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas who was called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were together; and Simon Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing." They replied, "We will come with you" and they went out and got into the boat. But they caught nothing that night.

When day had already broken, Jesus was standing on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus called them, "Children, have you anything to eat?" They answered, "Nothing." Then he said to them, "Throw the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they had lowered the net, they were not able to pull it in because of the great number of fish.

Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" At these words, "It's the Lord," Simon Peter put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and jumped into the water. The other disciples came in the boat dragging the net full of fish; they were not far from land, about a hundred meters.

When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you've just caught." So Simon Peter climbed into the boat and pulled the net to shore. It was full of big fish—one hundred and fifty-three—but, in spite of this, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast," and not one of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" for they knew it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and he did the same with the fish.

This was the third time that Jesus revealed himself to his disciples after rising from the dead.

Commentary

Peter and John tell the story and imitate Jesus. With power seeping out into the community in them and filled with the Holy Spirit, they tell the truth courageously. They are a far cry from the disheartened disciples, going back to fish and finding nothing all night. Jesus walks the beach, invites them to breakfast, and feeds them. "Come children, eat your meal." Eucharist is resurrection life and baptism experienced again in community, and when we eat together, we are forgiven and summoned beyond ourselves into the Body of Christ. In the bread and fish we are again made disciples, missionaries and bringers of good news to all.

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Gonzalez playing God, say women's advocates

By Philip C. Tuba

ACCUSING HIM OF "PLAYING GOD" AND abusing his authority, angry women's rights advocates yesterday demanded that Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez resign for downgrading the charges against three of the four US Marines accused of raping a Filipino woman in Subic last year.

Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales said Gonzalez had virtually allowed the three Marines—Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantier and S/Sgt. Chad Carpenter—to "go scot free" since as mere accessories, instead of principals, they could post bail.

"He made them accessories and that's bailable. If they post bail and go to the States, then that's it for the Philippines," Rosales said. "He is apparently drunk with power and playing God. He has failed not only to defend the dignity of the victim but also to assert the sovereignty of the country," she added.

The women's rights party-list group Gabriela said Gonzalez, and not Olongapo City Prosecutor Prudentio Jalandoni, should resign over the latest controversy to hit the celebrated rape case.

"Gonzalez has no moral ground to say Jalandoni is free to resign from the Subic rape case. If there is anybody who should

resign, it is him," the group said in a statement.

Jalandoni quit the case on Wednesday after saying he was disappointed by Gonzalez's decision that effectively overturned the results of the preliminary investigation he (Jalandoni) had conducted.

"What (Gonzalez) did was a big mistake. He tied the hands of the prosecution. The (Marines') lawyers will now cite the legal opinion of this great Raul Gonzalez," Rosales said. "He should resign."

Rosales noted that Gonzalez even admitted that he could have exonerated the Marines but decided against it, fearing a

public backlash.

"I almost exonerated them but didn't, if only to satisfy the mob," Gonzalez had said on Wednesday.

Retorted Rosales: "Who's he calling a mob? Women? Us Filipinos? He has the mental horizon of a chicken."

Lana Linaban, Gabriela deputy secretary general, said "all indications of a conspiracy to commit an injustice and to absolve the US Marines from the crime" pointed to Gonzalez.

"Ever since the case started, he hasn't been helpful but instead he's been busy defending the accused and insulting women at the same time," Linaban said.

Gabriela also assailed Gonzalez for saying that the three Marines cheering on the principal suspect, Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, during the alleged rape did not make them co-conspirators in the crime.

"This is a downright insult to the justice system. It's a shame that the head of the Department of Justice does not even understand the anti-rape law and is ignorant in dealing with sensitive cases such as rape," the group said.

Gabriela, on the other hand, lauded Jalandoni for speaking out against Gonzalez's decision to downgrade the charges against the three Americans.

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'FALSE HUMILITY'

Bishop slammed for apology to Erap

By Philip C. Tuba and
Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ADMINISTRATION ALLIES IN Congress yesterday called on the Church hierarchy to subject Novaleschis Bishop Antonio Tobias to disciplinary action for his "unauthorized" apology to deposed President Joseph Estrada last Wednesday.

Tobias went against the position of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and was dragging the Church into political controversy when he apologized to Estrada for the Church's role in the 2001 second people power uprising that ousted him, said Davao del Sur Rep. Douglas Cagas and Leyte Rep. Eduardo Veloso of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

It was "a show of arrogance and false humility" as he was "[try]ing hard to please Estrada on his 69th birthday," they said in a statement.

Tobias, who delivered the homily at the Mass to mark Estrada's 69th birth-

day last Wednesday, said he hoped Estrada would "forgive the Church for what happened to you."

It was thought that he was referring to the major role played by the late Jaime Cardinal Sin in the 2001 EDSA uprising that drove Estrada out of power. Tobias also claimed to have been at EDSA 2.

"The Catholic Church has nothing to apologize for. They listened to the voice of the people and that led to the confluence of events which eventually took Erap out of Malacañang in 2001," Cagas said.

He said Tobias should be reprimanded by the Church leadership for "compromising the position of the entire institution."

His statement was a "slap against the CBCP and the Church," he said.



TOBIAS

In Malacañang, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said Tobias' action said much about his character.

"I respect him as a bishop but I don't respect that type of character... I think even President Erap Estrada himself does not appreciate that type of character," Defensor said.

"Edsa 2 was not wrong, it was correct and it had basis at the time. There is nothing wrong with fighting against this administration but to regret what you did out of conviction years ago is not right," he said.

Defensor, who is President Macapagal-Arroyo's informal liaison with Estrada, said he was in constant touch with the disgraced leader.

"He [Estrada] likes me even though I

have never apologized for my role in Edsa 2," said Defensor who was one of the congressmen who set in motion the impeachment complaint against Estrada in 2000.

He said Estrada had told him that would apologize to him but he never liked this kind of people because they did not have "paninindigan" (principles) and "I agree with him totally."

Veloso said Tobias should apologize to the CBCP and the entire Catholic Church for taking it upon himself to apologize to Estrada.

"While democracy rules in the CBCP where every member is free to speak his mind, Bishop Tobias has no right or authority to speak in behalf of the organization much less for the whole church," Veloso said.

"The CBCP is trying to be apolitical and has so far succeeded in dismissing opposition efforts to use the Church against the government. But here comes Bishop Tobias issuing blatantly partisan political statements," he said.

PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE

Delays in signature checks seen

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS YESTERDAY hinted at possible delays in the ongoing verification of signatures for the people's initiative for Charter change being pushed by several groups.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said the office faced several problems most of them related to logistics after meeting with several election officers from cities and towns, the election agency's spokesperson for initiative matters, James Arthur Jimenez, told reporters in a briefing.

Jimenez said he did not want to use the phrase "slow down" in referring to the process of verification and opted to state that the Comelec was "taking its time" in perusing the millions of signatures which Cha-cha proponents claimed to have gathered in support of the initiative.

"We will not treat the verification as a special case that we

have to spend time. We will verify the signatures based on our timetable as elections officers who also have their regular schedules to follow," Jimenez said.

He said local Comelec officials would not be pressured into prioritizing or speeding up the verification and would do so at their "ideal time."

"They (the pro-Cha-cha groups) are not the only ones asking for attention. Comelec has other regular functions that might suffer. We will do what we will need to do," Jimenez said.

One of the election officers who attended the meeting with Abalos, lawyer Lourdes Ugalino of Makati City's 1st district, said the problems raised by her colleagues "mostly dealt with logistics."

"The chair cleared many questions; the problems were minimal," Jimenez also explained.

The spokesperson noted that many election officers had been busy in processing applications from people seeking to be registered as voters ahead of next year's midterm elections.

He said Abalos told the local Comelec officials "not to let the verification disrupt

their other functions."

He also stressed that there was no need for the Comelec central office to issue guidelines on the procedures for verification. "What's important for us is the transparency of this process and that we do our job correctly," he said.

Ugalino and Makati's 2nd district election officer, Melanie Lagera, whom Jimenez presented to reporters in the briefing, said they each received from the pro-Cha-cha group Akbay Pinoy a box containing sheets with the signatures of those who backed the initiative petition.

Lagera said that since her office was still busy conducting hearings for the applications for registration of voters, she had not yet opened the box, which was the size of a ballot box, that she received Monday.

Lagera said she wanted the box opened in the presence of representatives of Akbay Pinoy, members of the media and other interested parties, whether in favor of or against Cha-cha.

Ugalino for her part said she had opened the box and begun authenticating signatures and opening their record books.

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Namfrel nominates 3 to Comelec

By Jerome Aning

THE POLL WATCHDOG NATIONAL MOVEMENT for Free Elections yesterday said it had submitted to Malacañang three nominees for the two remaining vacancies in the Commission on Elections.

Nominated were Namfrel legal counsel Jose Bernas; Toby Melissa Monsod, daughter of former Comelec chair Christian Monsod; and former Cultural Center of the Philippines president Baltazar Endriga.

Endriga has been a member of the Namfrel Council since 1998 and served as the private sector representative to the Comelec's Advisory Council for Automation.

Monsod served as Namfrel's regional director in Mindanao and was a lead member of the audit team that conducted the validation of the Namfrel Terminal Report for the previous election.

The three were found to have the "necessary credentials" to serve as Comelec commissioners during a recent meeting of Namfrel's National Council, the group said in a statement.

"More importantly, they are persons who are known for their integrity, the very quality we need in our government's poll body in order to have fair and credible elections," Namfrel said.

Comelec's image has been tarnished by the "Hello, Garci" wiretapping scandal, with one of its commissioners being accused of rigging the results of the 2004 presidential elections. Some of the Comelec officials are also being investigated for graft for entering into an allegedly anomalous P1.3-billion computerization contract.

Namfrel said their nominees "were deliberated upon against the required criteria as stipulated in the Constitution."

Ailing Beltran headed for Heart Center

By Tarra V. Quismundo

RECENTLY ALLOWED TO transfer to a hospital of his choice, detained Rep. Crispin Beltran will have his heart checked at the Philippine Heart Center, his lawyers said in a manifestation submitted to a Makati court.

The lawyers on Wednesday filed a compliance report detailing the party-list legislator's medical treatment with Makati Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorio of Branch 137, who had granted the transfer request.

"Since Congressman Beltran is suffering from hypertensive cardiovascular disease, among other things, he opts to be transferred to the PHC (on) East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. His unstable health condition and risk of another stroke incident warrant that he undergo a cardiovascular work-up," said the report submitted by Beltran's lawyers from the Public Interest Law Center.

Beltran, 73, had been confined for more than a month at the Philippine National Police General Hospital in Camp Crame, Quezon City, following his arrest on

Feb. 24 for the non-bailable crime of rebellion.

The Department of Justice filed the case against Beltran and Magdalo member 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan for their alleged alliance with communist rebels armed at ousting President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In asking for Beltran's transfer, his lead lawyer Romeo Capulong had said in court that "space is not a problem" at the PNP hospital.

Rather, he said, it was the lack of facilities and specialists who could take care of Beltran.

At the PHC, Beltran would undergo a thorough checkup beginning today, doctors said, to include an electrocardiography, which would check his heartbeat, and a 2D (two-dimensional) echo doppler exam, an ultrasound that would probe the heart for any irregularities in size, muscle function and internal blood flow, among other things.

He would also undergo complete blood, urine, chest and brain tests.

The length of his confinement at the PHC would depend on the test results and his doctors, his lawyers said.



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House bill seeks to widen scope of Sotto law

IN DEFENSE OF PRESS FREEDOM, THE House of Representatives has passed a bill that would protect journalists working in the broadcast industry, news agencies and Internet publications from being forced to divulge the identities of confidential news sources.

In a statement issued by his office, De Venecia, himself a former journalist, pointed out that House Bill 4835 would amend Republic Act No. 53, also known as the Sotto Law, which was enacted in 1946 and extends such protection to the publishers, editors and reporters of print publications only.

The new bill, which was passed before Congress went on recess for Lent and Easter, would extend such protection to broadcast and Internet journalists as well.

"During these times of great challenges facing the nation, public information is a vital ingredient to national unity and to socio-economic and political development. The role of media in nation-building is clearly important," the statement quoted De Venecia, who is abroad, as saying.

He said the bill was intended to fill-up "an omission and correct an anomaly" in the present law, which was "enacted at a time when the Internet was not even a dream and the broadcast media just a vehicle for pure entertainment like music and dramas."

Philip C. Tubarez

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Deadline for submission of entries is midnight of April 30, 2006

GMA is out of town on 'semi-private' time

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGARRO went out of town yesterday but no one in the Palace is saying where she is exactly.

All her chief of staff, Michael Defensor, could say was that President Arroyo was having a "semi-private" time and that three congressmen were with her.

"I cannot reveal for security reasons," Defensor told reporters when asked of the whereabouts of the President, who had no schedule of any media coverage yesterday.

He said that Ms Arroyo left early in the morning yesterday.

Asked to confirm rumors that she was actually at Tubbataha Reef in Palawan to go diving, Defensor said he did not know.

He also couldn't say what time the President was expected back at the Palace.

But President Arroyo will be definitely back by today, with her media schedule starting at 1 p.m. when she is to host a roundtable discussion at Barangay Manggahan in Pasig City.

At 4 p.m. today, she will be in Indang, Cavite to address the 79th Commencement Exercises of the Cavite State University.



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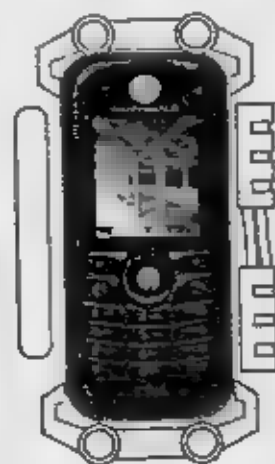

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- 3) CHIKKA.com will send a confirmation message and ask participant to text in CHUCKIE <space> REG <space> name <space> age <space> address.
- 4) More unique codes sent will earn participants more raffle entries that will entitle them to win other special prizes.
- 5) Promo period is: April 1-June 30, 2006
- 6) Grand draw date will be on July 15, 2006.

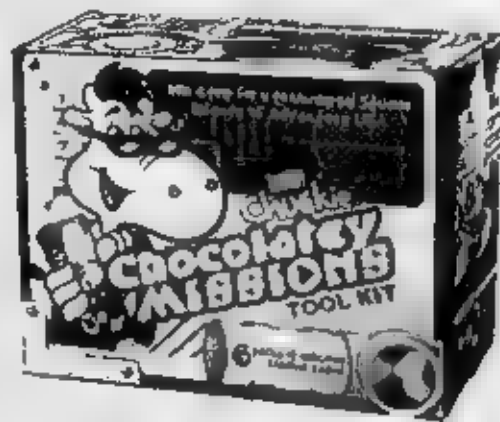
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- 3) A total of 10 Playstation Portables (PSPs), 20 Motorola C261 phones and 50 spy gadget kits will be given as consolation prizes.
- 4) Four (4) Motorola C261 phones will be given to GMA: four (4) in South Luzon; two (2) each in Central and North Luzon; and four (4) each in North Visayas and Mindanao.
- 5) Five (5) Playstation Portables (PSPs) will be given to GMA and One (1) each will be given to all areas mentioned above.
- 6) Raffle draw of the Playstation Portables (PSPs), Motorola C261 phones and spy gadget kits will be done every Friday of every 2 weeks during the duration of the promo, starting week of April 28.
- 7) Winners of consolation prizes are still qualified to win the grand prize.
- 8) Only the trip to Islands of Adventure Universal Studios grand prize is convertible to cash.



Other Mechanics:

- 1) Each unique code sent shall be equivalent to six (6) raffle entries.
- 2) Each unique code can only be sent once per mobile number. Texting the same code using the same mobile number shall not increase the number of raffle entries or chances of winning.
- 3) During the draw, there will be at least one representative each from Nestlé Philippines, CHIKKA.COM, and McCann Erickson with the supervision of a BFAD representative.
- 4) Only children ages 2-12 yrs. old are qualified to join. Parents or legal guardians of the child may send the unique code on behalf of the child provided that the child's name should appear in the entry.
- 5) The winner/s will be notified thru text message and registered mail.
- 6) Winners should claim their prizes at Nestlé Philippines, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City.
- 7) All employees of Nestlé Phils., advertising agencies and third party suppliers and relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity and affinity are not qualified for this promo.
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- 11) All applicable taxes on these tickets shall be shouldered by NPI.
- 12) Passport and visa applications are the responsibility of the winner's legal guardians and his/her companions.
- 13) The winner and his/her chosen companions must travel from the Philippines to the USA and back together.
- 14) NPI must be furnished all relevant travel documents and details required for travel bookings at least (4) four weeks prior to the intended date of travel provided that the winner has the option to redeem the prize within (6) six months from end of the promo.
- 15) NPI shall not be liable for any loss or damage whatsoever that the winner and his/her companions may suffer (including but not limited to direct or consequential loss, personal injury) as result of the trip. The winner, through his/her legal guardian, together with his/her companions shall sign a release, quitclaim and waiver absolving NPI from any liability. NPI reserves the right to refuse to allow the winner or any of his/her companions to travel to the USA, if NPI, determines, in its absolute discretion, that the winner or his/her companions is/are not in the best mental or physical condition necessary to travel safely in which case the cash equivalent shall be given instead.
- 16) During the draws, potential winners shall be notified by phone call and text message. Before declaring the winner, the respective cellular phone providers shall undertake the verification process of the cellular number of the potential winner. Only potential winners cleared by Chikka Asia, Inc. and the respective cellular phone providers shall be declared the winner.
- 17) Winners, through their legal guardians, shall be asked to present the notification letter or the text message received two (2) valid IDs and the 6-pack wrap containing the specific winning code when claiming their prize. The winners, through their legal guardians must present all of the mentioned requirements otherwise he/she cannot claim the prize.
- 18) In case of dispute, the decision of NPI in concurrence with the BFAD shall be deemed final.
- 19) Prizes not claimed within 60 days from end of the promo shall be forfeited in favor of NPI subject to the approval of the BFAD.
- 20) Names of the winners may, at NPI's discretion, be published in newspapers and other multimedia. Winners agree that their names and/or photos may be used in posters, commercials and other forms of multimedia.



ISSN
0115-2642

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Vol. 21 No. 122

OPINION

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Loathsome

OUTRAGE OVER JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ's downgrading of the charges against three of the four American servicemen accused of raping a Filipina seems to be concentrated more against his words than his actions. This only goes to show how effective Gonzalez is as the pit bull of the administration, in charge of snarling and frothing at the mouth and lunging at the crowd, both to frighten and distract the public. After all, he is not just any loose cannon but an integral part of the legal and political arsenal of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

There exists, in fact, a clear division between official attitudes toward the case. State prosecutors, such as Olongapo City Chief Prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni, believe they have adequate evidence to successfully prosecute all the accused American servicemen. Gonzalez has decided to the contrary, and while he hasn't totally let the other three American soldiers off the hook, only one will actually go on trial for rape. The charges against the others have been reduced to their being accessories.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye has gone on record to say the Arroyo administration fully supports Gonzalez. That means that the justice secretary's rather loathsome rhetoric aside, what he has done has the full blessings of the person for whom he serves as an alter ego: the President.

One of the lawyers of the rape victim brought up a point which indicates why Gonzalez's actions have been met with disgust. Even if Gonzalez says there isn't enough evidence to prove the other accused American servicemen actually raped the victim, Evalyn Ursua points out that the three kept chanting "Go, Smith!" as their fellow soldier assaulted and raped the Filipina. The lawyer asserts that egging on a rapist in this manner is tantamount to participating in a gang rape. It is an argument important enough, to our mind, to deserve being pursued in court. But because of Gonzalez, it won't be brought up when the case is tried.

Rape is an act that is less about sex than about power and degrading another person. There are many kinds of rape, and it is necessary in cases not involving actual intercourse to consider psychological intent and the reality that not just the sexual aspect, but the abuse of power and degradation of another deserve investigation and punishment. For these are crimes against persons, too.

In the end, Gonzalez will have the final say as far as this case is concerned. Individuals who don't agree will simply have to protest or, if they are officials, relinquish participation in the case. This is why Jalandoni had no honorable option other than what he's done: to resign from the prosecution team.

It's important to note that none of the four accused servicemen are off the hook. One, as we've said, will go on trial for rape, the other three, as Gonzalez has explained, will have to answer for witnessing the rape and doing nothing to stop it, and then abandoning the victim. There is still hope that all of them will be punished, though not to the extent the victim or her lawyers, including some government lawyers, feel they deserve.

Even as Malacañang notes that only seven months remain for the resolution of the Subic rape case, the nation will have to continue to bear the problem of a useful, but often nasty and alarmingly bigoted official in charge of what should be the clear, dispassionate, but unstoppable dispensation of justice. These things require judgment. And if the judgment calls of an official are immediately put into question because of the zeal and relish he displays in hitting back at critics, what does that say about his ability to inspire confidence?

Again, we return to our original point: For every comment Raul Gonzalez has made that offends, it is well to remember that the man, his thinking and the fruits of his thinking have the full and unequivocal support of the President and the rest of the Cabinet. And that's the most offensive thing of all—as well as the greatest injustice, not only to the executive branch of government but to the country.

BE GRATEFUL!
I COULD HAVE
EXONERATED
THEM (ALL).

— SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ



What were GMA's legal advisers doing?

As I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

Besides, before a prisoner's death sentence can be commuted, he must first be convicted with finality by the Supreme Court. But the cases of fully three-fourths of the more than 1,000 prisoners given executive clemency are still being reviewed by the high court, and therefore they are not yet eligible for commutation of sentence. What GMA just did was not mere commutation but legislation. She arrogated unto herself the legislative powers of Congress. At least, Marcos first abolished Congress before he assumed legislative powers, but Congress is still very much alive and kicking at present—although GMA and the House of Representatives would very much prefer the Senate would disappear.

What she should have done first was to certify a bill to Congress to repeal the death penalty law. But she is doing that only now, after she had already committed her booboo. What were all her legal advisers doing before she made the error? Did she consult any one of them? Did Little Mike or Bunye or any of her numerous super-strips suggest it as a PR gimmick? Or did she decide on it all on her own? Did God appear to her during the retreat in Baguio and tell her to spare all the death convicts so that the government can save money on the drugs to be used for lethal injections?

"I think she did it to save her own skin," commented an opposition critic. "With all her sins against the nation, she knows that she would be prosecuted once she is no longer in power (as they are doing now to former President Estrada), and considering the gravity of many of her crimes, she is like

ly to be sentenced to lethal injection. With the abolition of the death penalty, she would be spared the fate of Marie Antoinette."

Let me repeat that it was an oppositionist who said that, so you should take it with a grain of salt.

Exacting laws are very clear: Squatters occupying the right-of-way of government infrastructure projects, like railways, highways and streets, buildings and the banks of rivers and creeks, can be ejected summarily and are not entitled to relocation or financial help from the government. So it is amazing why lawyers still keep filing cases in behalf of squatters on the right-of-way of government infrastructure projects petitioning courts to stop the projects so the squatters don't have to be ejected.

The latest to do that is Hermie Harry Roque Jr. on behalf of a group of squatters and squatter organizations who petitioned the Makati Regional Trial Court to nullify the NorthRail project contract, citing the lack of public bidding and claiming the project is "injurious to the squatters illegally occupying hectares of public land along the railway tracks."

Roque filed last year the same charges with the Supreme Court, which eventually dismissed the case (Roque et al. vs. Ermita et al., GR No. 169773). He also headed the investigation by the University of the Philippines Law Center, commissioned by Senate President Franklin Drilon. The Center erroneously identified CNMEC as the prime contractor, instead of CNMEG or the China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. (Group). CNMEC stands for China National Machinery and Equipment Import-Export Corp., one of the 70 subsidiaries of CNMEG, China's sixth largest corporation and one of the world's top construction companies. The Philippine government was originally accused of dealing with a pre-tender company that lacked the capability to undertake a multibillion-peso railways system, prompting the Chinese government to issue a statement setting the record straight and denying the allegations. (To be continued)

English is cool, Pinoy English is 'kulang'

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

In any way in English. The results also show that personal usage was higher in Metro Manila and in the Visayas than in other areas, in the cities more than the provinces, among the wealthier rather than poorer and, a pleasant surprise, more among the youth than their elders. The combined "full use-fair use" group thus brings to 40 percent the Filipinos who speak English on their own, lower than the 47 percent that registered in the September 2000 survey—disappointing though not disheartening.

Other Asian countries send their youth to the Philippines to learn English. English-wise, we are way ahead of our Asian neighbors, but they are swiftly catching up. When I have foreign guests, they ask how they can give instructions to their Manila cab driver, and I say nonchalantly that they can speak in English to any cab driver and they will manage. Try doing that in Jakarta or Kuala Lumpur.

As Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov famously asked: What is to be done? The most basic is to improve the English competency of the teachers themselves.

For my generation, all subjects were taught in English, and Filipino was used only in one subject called "Filipino" and the subject called "Language" was actually taught in English. We have since reformed. Today, we acknowledge that teaching the basic subjects to primary school children in a foreign language makes no sense. The child has enough problems with math, and then we compound his problems by teaching it in a language he doesn't understand. The young ones today learn many of their subjects in Filipino, and that is only wise.

The old approach bordered on some sort of "immersion" but only in the sense that the child was being a good boy or girl and speaking English. The idea was to make the child speak English when he was with his teacher and when he was with his friends.

When I was in school, the English teachers used to say, "Speak English when you are in school." This was a good idea, but it was not enough. We needed to learn to use English in our daily lives.

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Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Public opinion kinder to Estrada

THE CELEBRATION OF FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada's 69th birthday on Tuesday was more of a political and judicial landmark than a precious personal event for him and his still considerable body of sympathizers. It revealed, among other things, the durability of his charisma, how much distance has been covered in the judicial system by his trial on plunder charges since they were filed with the Sandiganbayan on April 25, 2001, the shifts in public opinion of him, and the change in the configuration of political forces that played roles in the collapse of his administration in January 2001. All this shows how much flux the Philippine political climate has undergone since he was deposed on Jan. 21, 2001.

To begin with, the birthday was celebrated at St. Peter's Parish Church near the Sandiganbayan. It was the first time he celebrated his birthday outside his detention area since his arrest on April 25, 2001. The previous celebrations were held at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center and at his comfortable rest house in Tanay, Rizal.

The reception table was loaded with food worthy of a feast. The parish was transformed into a fiesta mood for a patron saint, with fireworks, brass band, balloons and anti-airman dancers. Ten priests concelebrated the Mass, a privilege the Church extended, even though it is scrounging for priests to say Mass in thousands of parishes all over the country. To top it all, VIPs from the political sector, including his allies as well as his former tormentors, celebrated with Estrada.

But it would be a mistake to suggest that these manifestations point to the start of Estrada's political rehabilitation. Far from it, his chances of rehabilitation and making a political comeback are as slim as the rehabilitation of Judas after the discovery of "The Gospel of Judas." It cannot be said that all have been forgotten and forgiven. If we want to read the true nature of Philippine political culture correctly, the worst way to do it is through its superficial manifestations. This is what makes Philippine politics perplexing to for-

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



signers and even to scholars.

The judicial process in his plunder case is still under way. On his birthday, Estrada had to attend trial at the nearby Sandiganbayan. Estrada and his lawyers arrived at the courtroom an hour late for the 9:30 a.m. hearing. The justices did not make an issue of the tardiness and accepted his apologies.

The case has dragged on for five years. It was only last month when Estrada started testifying in his defense. And that was a significant turn of events.

Prior to that date, most of the previous five months were used up by delays or postponements. At the very least, it's fair to say that Estrada's side is now being heard. And that the case is moving toward closure, which is important to the credibility of the judicial system in deciding cases without fear or favor.

The change of the climate was underlined by the complexion of VIPs who celebrated with Estrada. They represented a broad political spectrum, ranging from former Sen. Loren Legarda, political allies like Representatives Imee Marcos and Ronaldo Zamora, show-biz personalities, including Susan Roces, widow of defeated presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., Estrada's film-hand buddy, and his nemesis, former Sen. Teofisto Guingona.

The presence of Estrada loyalists was understandable. But Guingona's presence was what made the celebration remarkable. It was Guingona's "I Accuse" privilege speech in the Senate that set the stage for Estrada's impeachment when the

disclosure by Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson that Estrada had allegedly received *justing* payoffs was beginning to lose its novelty. Now Guingona would like us to believe that he had done his job as a senator, but that what followed was so much waver under the bridge. "We just became principled adversaries," he said.

But this only goes to show that fortunes in Philippine politics and alignments are so fluid that former enemies suddenly find themselves breaking bread. When politicians like Guingona talk about "principles," it's best not to believe them. What we should examine more closely is whether institutional processes are being followed and moving toward closure. And this is what is happening in Estrada's plunder case.

It was not beyond Estrada to consider that the political crisis that shook the Arroyo administration would result in the overthrow of her regime and bring in a government with which he could negotiate. But the case has already gone beyond the stage where its outcome can be negotiated.

Public opinion on Estrada has changed over the past five years. It's kinder to him now and tends to forget the worst things the people had thought about him five years earlier. Ironically, President Macapagal-Arroyo, who benefited from the public's hatred for Estrada, is now more unpopular than Estrada was at his lowest popularity rating.

A public opinion survey conducted last March showed that, on the question of the most acceptable person to lead the country, 17 percent of the respondents chose Estrada, and only 11 percent picked President Arroyo. Estrada followed Vice President Noli de Castro, who got 23 percent. This rating encouraged Estrada loyalists to claim that the plunder trial had not closed the possibility of his making a political comeback.

Estrada's prospects for judicial exoneration and political rehabilitation do not lie in volatile and fickle public opinion. They are better served by putting closure to the plunder case, which now appears to be within his grasp.

No turning back

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

followers, smacks of grandstanding on the prelate's part.

If indeed the bishop had wanted to do his part as a spiritual adviser, then perhaps he could have done the sermonizing in private, in the confessional—provided, of course, that Erap would have sought his counsel and forgiveness.

Then, too, what right did Bishop Tobias have to ask Estrada's "forgiveness" for what the "Church" did in 2001? For one thing, the "Church" is made up of not just the bishops and priests but the faithful as well. Was he saying that he was also speaking on behalf of the thousands of the faithful gathered on Edsa on those fateful days? Did he survey the crowd and ask them if they felt sorry for what they did?

Since Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Church leader who played the most prominent part in giving comfort and counsel to the crowds at Edsa Dos, has passed away, is Bishop Tobias saying the late cardinal was wrong? That seems insulting and arrogant at best, especially since the cardinal is no longer around to defend himself. And has Bishop Tobias taken the mantle of Church leadership here so that he now feels free to issue blanket regrets over Erap's ouster?

What was the point? And why couldn't the bishop simply speak for himself without dragging the rest of us at Edsa along with him?

BISHOP Tobias' double-bladed homily illustrates precisely what troubles so many otherwise decent folks who're now choosing to stay on the sidelines in the protracted political struggle over President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Erap's family and core supporters certainly want

to create a scenario where the early departure of GMA from Malacañang means a triumphant return for the deposed president. And the longer GMA insists on staying on despite allegations about her stealing the election, and the harder she works to railroad an even longer tenure for herself, the more likely this scenario seems.

Observers have already noted how politicians and civic leaders who were once at the forefront of the "oust-Erap" movement now have no qualms about sharing the same protest stage with known supporters and even family members of the former president. So is it simply a case of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend"?

NOW that Bishop Tobias has so baldly laid out the polarized options of the post-Edsa Dos protesters, perhaps it's time the anti-GMA movement, especially those who had taken such moralistic stances regarding the failings of the Erap administration then, made clear where they stand now. Perhaps they should address the discomfort and unease of many and cut and cut cleanly any ties with Erap and the Erap forces, no matter how convenient it may be for now and how the Erap machinery can muster the needed crowds.

They need to send the message that to be anti-GMA today is not to be pro-Erap, because, to quote Bishop Tobias, Estrada has had his power and he failed miserably.

People also need to see that being anti-GMA today is to be for something: for imperatives like truth and justice, good government and the Constitution.

Anti-GMA leaders need to show that there is a way forward, that despite the present lack of seemingly viable names and faces, we can create a new and different future if only we keep faith in our country. Certainly, there is no turning back, despite the fervent hopes of Erap and his coterie. The strongest message to be sent to both Ms. Arroyo and Estrada is that their time has passed, and that the nation deserves to move on, with new leadership and a new mandate from the Filipino people.

than higher officials. A mayor, for example, wouldn't even know the people on the tracks were meeting. Barangay officials in Makati played a key role in evicting 2,800 families from the railroad tracks, their own people, over the past two months by frightening and threatening them. When the families were gone, the officials celebrated with the incentives given them by superiors. Arguments in favor of organizing, democracy and free choice have little weight in the face of threats made by these officials.

We shouldn't be surprised that the urban barangay is so easily employed by higher ups to control people. Weren't they established by President Ferdinand Marcos for that very purpose in the early days of martial law? "Truly I was born a sinner; in sin my mother conceived me," the Psalmist says. He could have been speaking of the urban barangay.

As it is hard to imagine living on the diet of the poor, it is hard for middle-class people to imagine the atmosphere of fear that overhangs poor people, especially those who aspire to live as free citizens. Top officials may not be fully responsible for all the excesses of barangay officials and others, but they have unleashed the tiger and it goes its own destructive way.

People working with the ADB say that China's elite may be dictatorial, but they make serious concessions to the poor because they fear social unrest. They lament that this is not so in democratic Philippines where there are no limitations on the elite who can ignore the poor without repercussions. They know how to manipulate the poor at election time. At other times, they intimidate them.

Hunger and fear lie at the base of urban poor inaction. Hunger and fear have no place in a nation that celebrates Jesus' Resurrection.

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates.

'Pasintabi'

IN MOST LANGUAGES IN THE PHILIPPINES, WE SAY "tubi" or "tubi tubi," with a few variations such as the Ilokano "bert bert." The message is the same: "Please step aside." It's a way of excusing ourselves as we intrude into someone's territory.

What's so intriguing is that we are addressing the "unseen" here, supposedly spirits inhabiting the place. We can't really tell where the spirits are and so to be safe, we excuse ourselves just to be sure we don't anger the inhabitants disturbed by our intrusion.

Pinoy males are especially vulnerable, with their penchant for seeking instant bladder relief anywhere. Failure to excuse oneself might lead to the unseen getting drenched, followed by vengeance in the form of the shower-giver getting sores and wounds that don't heal or, worse, a swelling of the offending anatomical part.

In Jesus' name

The practice is called "pasintabi" in Tagalog, sometimes translated as an "apology." But it is really more of an "Excuse me, please." It's a way of acknowledging that certain places are sacred, requiring some respect. Places that elicit this feeling of sacredness tend to be the more pristine, such as thick forests, a river that still runs vigorously—in other words, any place that inspires awe.

The practice is slowly disappearing. One contributing factor is life in the urban jungle, where nothing's sacred anymore, although I do know quite a few males who still excuse themselves out of habit even as they use one of Bryan Fernandez's pink urinals. "You never know," says one friend, while I fret not so much about the unseen spirits than about the electrical post possibly having stray live wires.

The disappearance of pasintabi reflects the way our mindsets have shifted. We no longer fear nature, feeling we've conquered her. I thought about this angle when two of my Protestant students recently shared views about a shift in this cultural practice. Evangelical pastors have encouraged a new practice: as one goes through an unfamiliar area, he should not say "tubi po" but should instead utter, "In Jesus' name." The evangelicals' assumption here is that there are indeed spirits, and that they are malevolent, therefore one invokes Jesus' name to tell them to step aside.

I'm ambivalent about this new practice. On one hand, it tends to reflect the way we look at our position, as humans, as being one of dominating and conquering nature, maybe even invoking the name of Jesus as we do this. But I did get another take on this practice when I shared this bit of information during a speech at a recent conference on Population, Health and the Environment. After my talk, one of the Protestant pastors in the audience came up to me and gave me another interpretation: invoking Jesus' name is intended to be a way of dealing with one's fears.

Fear

Fair enough. But that observation did remind me again of our own collective mixed feelings about nature. I've written in the past about the way we want to think we've come to dominate nature, and yet deep down, especially when natural disasters strike, we are really terrified by nature. Unfortunately, that fear of nature is misplaced. Instead of excusing ourselves as we intrude into nature, we now try to obliterate nature.

The disappearance of pasintabi accompanies our growing denial about the many ways we contribute to the destruction of the environment. At the Population, Health and Environment conference, I focused on the blinders we have about the link between population growth and natural disasters. Let's look quickly at the recent tragedy in Barangay Guinsaung in Southern Leyte. There were 1,600 people living in 40 hectares of land, a population density of 4,000 per square kilometer. That's way above the already crowded national average, which is 255 per square kilometer, and certainly, for an upland area, that kind of density is suicidal.

I am not blaming the people of Guinsaung. We should be examining our conscience, as a nation, in continuing to insist that there is no population problem, that it's all right to continue to take over whatever land there is and to marginalize the poor and powerless, driving them to live in harm's way. Guinsaung reminds us that we need to be looking at other similar areas courting disaster (the summer season makes me think of Baguio's hillside shanty colonies).

The practice of pasintabi reminds us that there is room for co-existence, co-evolution. We can use nature's resources, so long as we are respectful, mindful of the need to use these resources wisely, recycling and replacing whenever we can. I can even envision a new take on the use of "In Jesus' name." Rather than seeing nature as being populated by evil spirits, we need to see nature as a generous host offering us her home, with complete freedom. We may feel uncomfortable and fearful at times, visiting her huge mansion, and so maybe for some people, "In Jesus' name" might be appropriate. But wouldn't it be ridiculous now to invoke Jesus' name against the host who has offered us her home?

Eventually, we might be able to achieve a more sensible balance in the way we look at nature: less fear, more respect. Nature and her "spirits" have almost always been the ones to step aside, maybe sometimes, we too should reciprocate this graciousness.

Nature watch

Today's Earth Day, so here's a little present, a nature watch, which I hope to do regularly, with some help from readers.

I was surprised at how many of my friends commented favorably on my last column, "Quiet time," especially how it alerted them to the splendor of the trees around us. But our blindness to the flowering trees is another example of how we've lost our sense and sensibility around nature.

A friend of mine recently sent an article about how the Japanese wait, each year, for the cherry trees (*sakura, sakura*) to blossom, a way of marking how spring has truly arrived. So concerned are the Japanese about the cherry blossoms that the government is expected to issue accurate predictions, much like the weather, on when the blossoms are due.

We don't need to be so obsessed, but I'd like to encourage the development of a sense of our own seasons, marked by blooming trees and shrubs. The yellow flame trees I wrote about last time flowers over the Holy Week, a reminder of how ephemeral beauty can be. But we still have the golden shower trees (there are some particularly splendid examples along Hemady Avenue in Quezon City). You might also want to visit the UP Diliman campus, where kapok trees near the Lagoon and the Palma Hall parking lot have been "knowing" over the last few days.

In a few weeks, expect UP to be covered by the crimson canopies of fire trees. I'll try to get the word out as soon as they bloom, and hope other readers will alert me as well to nature's other dramatic shows.

Tubi po.

IF I WERE ERAP, I WOULDN'T KNOW WHETHER to embrace or slug Bishop Antonio Tobias after that homily the bishop delivered Wednesday during the Mass held in observance of the former President's birth anniversary.

There were no reports of what former President Estrada did at the close of the Mass, so my guess is that Erap, who is at least acknowledged as being unforgivingly gracious and polite, if not exactly a paragon of civility and good behavior, held in his feelings and bid the bishop a polite farewell.

I'm not even an adherent of the ousted leader, but just listening to video excerpts of the bishop's remarks, I felt myself squirming in my seat, out of discomfort for both Erap's sake and the bishop's.

How would you like to be told on your birthday that you are and have been a sinner who broke several of the Ten Commandments and that you should no longer harbor dreams or fantasies of returning to power?

Then again, Erap might have felt like he had received the biggest birthday present yet when the bishop apologized on behalf of the Catholic Church "for what happened to you" in 2001, even if he added that he and other Church leaders would probably do it again if the situation warranted.

Bishop Tobias gave, and Bishop Tobias took away—though I don't know in what order his apology and scolding were worded. But I do know one thing: the biggest loser at that birthday Mass was not Erap but the good bishop, who managed to paint himself as both uncouth and unctuous in one fell swoop.

The reminder about Erap's sins may have been called for, and some quarters (but not this columnist) may have thought the apology was necessary, but both statements could have been better phrased or more politely worded.

STILL, the issue is not merely one of semantics, or civil behavior and speech.

For one thing, Bishop Tobias may have been in the right when he rebuked the former president about his failings, but to do so on so public an occasion, and one that had been planned to at least give comfort to an individual and his

TWO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AMONG THE poor of Metro Manila should worry us: their growing hunger and their growing fear of government. Neither has any place in a democracy. Hunger and fear prevent any effective participation of the poor in political life, which participation, research shows, is critical in the country. Without the participation of the poor, there is no way to control the excesses for the powerful. Changing presidents doesn't alter the country's basic power structure, so that little, if anything, changes. Full participation of the poor will bring change.

Surveys show that hunger is increasing among the poor, but what does this mean in reality? It means, first of all, that more than 50 percent of poor families now eat only twice a day—at noon and in the late afternoon, poor people tell us. For a meal, a family of five or six may have a kilo of rice (P21), 10 cups or fish equivalent (P10) and guly (P10). The exact mix of food items may vary—people may eat noodles instead of rice—but the total cost is nearly always P100 a day, for that is the food budget of the average poor family. Family monthly income among the poor averages between P6,000 and P7,000. Half their money goes for food. The family's P100 daily budget means P20 or less a day for each member. Prisoners are allotted P35 a day in the country's national prisons.

People who have this meager diet day in and day out say they are always hungry. The situation is far worse for the 17 to 20 percent of poor families who earn P3,500 or less a month. What can anyone eat with P10 per person per day? The fertilizer scandal takes on a new meaning when we see how little food is available for the poor.

Further, while the increase in the cost of living for the whole population is about 7 percent per year, it is much higher for the poor, according to Karin Schelzig Bloom of the Asian Development Bank. She told this writer this phenomenon has been well known since 1958. The poor need their

Hunger and fear

COMMENTARY

Denis Murphy

own cost-of-living analysis, she says. An informal study showed food prices of the poor rose by 21 percent in 2005. The survey covered the prices of sugar, sardines, noodles and eggs.

The second ominous development is a gathering cloud of fear which stunts efforts to bring the poor into the democratic process. Many among the poor are afraid now to attend meetings—and not only those that deal directly with political change, but even those called to discuss happenings in their immediate lives. Recently for example, a barangay captain in Pasig warned the people living on the railroad tracks not to meet to discuss their coming eviction. He said it was prohibited by Proclamation 1017, and if they met, he would arrest them. The man later caused the arrest of Kadangkay people who tried to hold such a meeting.

People living on the University of the Philippines campus were invited to attend a meeting that would discuss Charter change. They said they wouldn't come because barangay officials had warned them not to or else they would be punished. People living on the railroad tracks in Manila were afraid to celebrate the Kalibanyo this year in their barangays because the Kalibanyo judges government actions in the light of the Passion, and they were afraid their barangay leaders would object. The basic teaching of the Kalibanyo is that society treats the poor today as the Romans treated Jesus: in harming the poor, we harm Jesus who has identified Himself with the poor.

Much of the people's fear is caused by barangay officials. These officials are in a unique position to frighten poor people because they know what they do and their individual needs and they can punish in more personal and effective ways

The pitfalls of Charter change

IF OUR HONORABLE CONGRESSMEN really want changes in the present Constitution, they can do it in the most prudent way.

Since its ratification in 1788 or 218 years ago, the US Constitution has been amended only 27 times but never revised. The amendments—covering diverse subjects such as political rights, judicial reform, economic reform and the interpretation of the constitution itself—were simply introduced through joint resolutions of the US Congress. In fact, several proposed amendments did not get the nod of the US Congress.

For example, in the past, there were proposals to "remove the limitation on the number of terms an individual may serve as President." However, many members of the US Congress would not push or even talk about the idea because it was not a popular issue

then—as it is up to the present.

The last amendment to the US Constitution was made in 1992. In short, the US Constitution has not been "revisited" in the last 14 years.

Ours has been rewritten three times (1935, 1973 and 1987) since 1898. Constitutional amendments were also introduced in 1937 (women's rights), 1940 (extending the term of the President and Vice President), 1946 (parity rights) and during the Marcos era.

Some of the 27 amendments to the US Constitution are:

Amendment 26 (1971). The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Amendment 19 (1920). The right of citizens of the United

States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Amendment 16 (1913). The Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

Amendment 15 (1870). The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Most of the amendments to the US Constitution are written in very few (mostly two) paragraphs. The US Congress has been amending their constitution for ages. I do not understand why the Philippine Congress hasn't done the same thing. Then, maybe, by

now

we would have had an ideal Constitution and we would have been enjoying stability, peace and progress, with our economy among the world's largest.

Revising or rewriting the Constitution only encourages repeated tinkering with the Constitution to suit the agenda of every sitting President. Good if the incumbent cares for the country and its people.

If this vicious cycle of changing the Constitution keeps on turning, then we can only watch our Asian neighbors and the rest of the world marching forward on the road to progress while our country remains stuck in the backwaters of underdevelopment.

—REY S. PARADERO,
Violago Homes Phase 2,
Silang, Quezon City

LETTERS

A baseless and fabricated complaint

IN THE APRIL 11 COLUMN OF Ramon Tulio, he commented on the charges filed by a certain Richelle Vinales against me. He said the complaint "is believable."

In an earlier rejoinder to an inquirer news item about this complaint, I clearly answered the charges of Vinales. The records will show that the complaint is baseless and the issues being peddled by the complainant are fabricated.

We did not know earlier that Vinales is a troublesome character who was dismissed as an employee of Padil's Restaurant before he worked in our family business. He even had the temerity to ask his former co-employees to join him in his vilification campaign against me. He even threatened them with bodily harm for refusing to do so.

—REE NANETTE CASTELO DAZA, 8
Fourth District, Quezon City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

GMA knows what she should do

DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 2004, I voted for Bro. Eddie Villanueva because I believed that morality, integrity and wisdom would bring the country out of misery. I even openly said to my peers, "Sana ma-di daya na lang si FPJ para hindi siya maralo, il pero hindi ibig sabihin na masama siyang tao, ni kundi dahil hindi ako sang-ayon sa kakayahang niya." And then Gloria won.

But when the "Hello, Garci" tape came out, it was as if I had been struck by lightning. I was not careful about what I wished for.

I don't know what is keeping GMA in office. Maybe she is scared that the truth will come out, or is it greed for power? Or she has made herself believe that she alone can run the government?

But her morality and integrity have deteriorated. She should save what is left of her reputation before time runs out. To and this crisis, Gloria knows deep in her heart what she should do.—Hermie Sacil (via e-mail)

Kidnapping and corruption are like the Bonifacio and Rizal monuments: once institutionalized, no amount of human effort can demolish them. We might as well sing "The Impossible Dream."—Terry Herrera (via e-mail)

It makes me sick to learn that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who cheated Fernando Poe Jr., will confer on him the National Artist Award. If Poe were alive, he probably would wait for the next president before accepting the award.—Fred Villaro, California (via e-mail)

Our ordinary citizens should remain hopeful and positive, and observe and follow our laws to prevent anarchy. (Remember May 1, 2001, when the opposition stirred up the masses which led to bloody riots?)

Let us not think small but think global. Let us not be content with producing products that are *puwedeng puwede* but let us make those that are *puwedeng-puwede*. Let us uphold the tradition of excellence that was once inseparable from the name Philippines. Remember the International Rice Research Institute? It still stands as the top agricultural research institution in Asia.

Let us preserve the country for our younger ones. Our elders did it for us.—Domes Briones (via e-mail)

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has got to go, and it's just a matter of time. The and-government rallies will not stop and it is wise for her to think about the inevitable.

She is not so bad as President, but Filipinos need someone better. Unfortunately, the possible successors are not so good as we would like them to be and they will also fall short of the people's expectations.—Jocuar Francisco, Bahrain (via e-mail)

There is always a better alternative to any given situation. However, the better alternative is not always best taken any time you want. Some words of advice: Leave the current President alone! Let her do her job and we'll see what the next few years of carrying reforms will produce. Six years is not enough to implement all the radical changes needed to uplift the living conditions of most Filipinos.

I am a Filipino living abroad, not by choice but out of necessity. How I would love to go back to the Philippines if the opportunity is there. I am very proud that we have a President who is an economist—not an actor, not a politician's widow, not a former military officer, not a former first lady of a dictator, nor a militant.—Jerry Jones (via e-mail)

Let GMA submit herself to a polygraph test administered by Scotland Yard and supervised by the Vatican. Keep the PNP, NBI, DOJ, DILG, AFP and Comelec away from it, otherwise the result will be tainted and questionable.

One question to ask: Did she or didn't she cover up the truth on *jueteng* and the "Hello, Garci" case?

So long as the demands of truth are not met, our country and people will continue to suffer.—Abraham V. Llera (via e-mail)

ABENSON

Cool Summer Super Sultit

Cool Summer Deals

Comet

WCARF010EA
1 HP
Manual
P2345678

Panasonic

CW-SC52JPH
0.5HP
Manual
P1234567

LG

LA60MG
0.65HP
Manual
P1234567

Samsung

AW-09P1HBA
1 HP
Manual
P1234567

Koln

KAG-11ME
1 HP
Manual
P1234567

SPLIT TYPE

Panasonic

Model	HP	SEER	PRICE
CSU-PC9EKQ	1	11.5	21,899
CSU-KC12EKQ	1.5	11.5	40,999
CSU-C18EKQ	2	11.2	38,999
CSU-C24EKQ	2.5	11.8	40,799

Kelvinator

WKELK01TEA
1.25HP
Manual
P2345678

Koln

LA150MG
1.5HP
Timer
P1234567

Alibang 850-8850/8914	Cebu 1 645-0402 to 04	Deamaries (046) 416-2104/5267	Galloria 632-9101/0508117	Jaka 829-2886/87	Lucena (042) 373-0443	Pasig 856-8643/47	Rustons 911-2313/3484	Sta Rosa (049) 534-4888/4819	LCC-Naga (054) 473-8003
Angolais (045) 808-9086	Cebu 2 681-5301 to 06	Dau (045) 882-4295	Gapen (044) 486-7849	Kalookan 363-3348/5338	Makati 812-2862/1504	Pearl Plaza 861-8401/03	San Joaquin, Pasig 841-4452	St. Francis 633-1362/84	Pacific Mall -Lagazpi (052) 480-8288
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Belangue (043) 723-6790	Carmona (046) 430-2701/04	Fairview 938-7908/7810	Glorieta 1 818-6453	Libis 687-1813/1688	Metropolitan 833-7585/7529	Quezon City 724-2570/2501	Shangri-la 638-8019/94960	Tayuman 252-6787/8836	
Biliran (049) 411-4511	Cominorwaath 961-8970/8981	Farmers 911-1103/1184	Harmon Plaza 521-8550/58	Lipa (043) 404-1651	Metropolis 808-8174/8021	Riverbanks 941-5003/5191	Showroom 831-5188	The Fort 888-8820/8491/82	
Cabalanum (044) 484-1482	Congressional 927-8390/8520	Filinvest 850-3775	Imus (046) 471-8020/30	Louis (048) 515-6749/51	Missouri 722-1264/1157	Rosario (046) 438-5487	SM City, N.E. 920-9151/53	Valenzuela 277-9538/3839	

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Korean shipyard project faces protest

By Allan Macatuno
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC, ZAMBALES—

The construction of what is deemed as the country's largest ship building facility here was met with protests by at least 200 families who are going to be displaced by the project.

Residents of Sitio Agusuhan here formed human barricades to prevent clearing operations on a 230-hectare lot along the Redondo Peninsula, the site of the 2.3 million-square meter shipyard here. It is within the Subic Bay Presport Zone.

Members of the Samahan ng mga Nagkakaisang Residente ng Agusuhan (Samanta) expressed their dismay over the failure of Hanjin shipping company officials to give proper compensation for their houses and a relocation site.

More than 70 houses and other government structures, including schools, have already been demolished since February this year, according to Teresita Ogayon, a resident.

"We are willing to leave our place as long as they will give us just compensation and assure us that there will be a permanent site for relocation as they have promised," Ogayon said.

She said some of the houses had been demolished after residents sold them for low prices to the Korean shipping firm but the proposed relocation site has not been reached yet.

This rendered some 150 residents homeless. They were also forced to stay in their ruined houses while waiting to be transferred to the relocation area.

Residents placed several streamers in the area condemning the "unjust and deliberate destruction" of their property without being compensated properly.

They also denounced the demolition of three public school buildings in the area despite their strong opposition.

"Our local officials cannot even assure us that children here will be able to return to school," said Ludivico Salcedo, another resident and spokesperson of Samanta.

Tension gripped the area after the provincial government sent troops from the Special Action Force.

The shipping firm also deployed 12 private security guards. Vice Gov. Ramon Jacob II appealed for an amicable settlement. Sonny Pumarada, Hanjin project coordinator, said there is no forced demolition but only dismantling because some of the houses have been bought and paid for by the Korean shipping firm.



WHERE ONCE A VILLAGE LAY

People try to live normal lives after tragedies as this farmer does, riding in his carabao past a cross that serves as a quiet reminder that on that spot once lay Guinsaugon, a village in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte that was torn down with life until a landslide brought an end to its existence.

MAN ANNALEZ/PIV VISAYAS BUREAU

Mystery surrounds delay in start of STL in Pampanga

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—The state-sanctioned small town lottery (STL) has not been started in Pampanga, which has been dubbed as the "Vatican of jueteng."

Chief Supt. Alejandro Lapinid Cenra, Luzon police director on Thursday confirmed the delay in the test-run, or actual operation, of the STL in Pampanga but could not tell the reasons for it. The STL was supposed to work as an antidote to jueteng, the illegal numbers game.

"The operator has not coordinated with us in the police," he said of the Sun Cove Corp. that in March obtained the STL license from the state-owned Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

"Perhaps they're still organizing," he said. Sources had said that some

of the companies that were given licenses to operate STL were owned by Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, believed to be the country's biggest gambling lord.

He said he could not also tell if the delay stemmed from any resistance by displaced operators or financiers of jueteng, which was stopped in the region since May 2005 when whistleblowers claimed that close relatives of President Macapagal-Arroyo were among the game's protectors.

Various estimates placed the displaced employees in the region at over 100,000.

Lapinid ruled out reports that the STL operator needed to settle the terms of sharing with the regional Philippine National Police, an arrangement that reportedly existed with jueteng financiers before.

"There are clear implementing rules and regulations (from the PCSO) so we need not talk of anything," he said.

Delayed

Romualdo Quiones, chief of the PCSO's STL project management office in Manila, could not also explain the delay in Sun Cove's operations in Pampanga. The President's home province Her son Rep. Juan Miguel "Mkey" Arroyo, represents the second district.

Lake Tahoe Gaming Corp. and Sunset Bay Research and Marketing Group were operating on schedule in Angeles City and Bataan, respectively, he said.

Earlier, he denied reports that suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda owned any or all

of these STL license-holding companies.

The question of Sun Cove's operations has arisen from several displaced cobradores (collectors) who for almost a month now go around several northern villages in the City of San Fernando, the capital of Pampanga, gathering bets for jueteng.

"We're told that we are going to be hired for the STL. But we have not been called to a meeting or issued identification cards. We'd like to be employed again, although legally now through STL," a cobrador told the Inquirer.

"If STL is the solution to jueteng, why has it not started employing us?" he asked.

As the STL remained non-existent in Pampanga, police reports showed that jueteng operations were inactive in the re-

gion. In March, the police in Tarlac arrested three jueteng collectors in Barangay Marubog in Camiling town. Arrests for jueteng, a legal variant of the jueteng and the state-run lotto were made in Barangay Nonong in San Luis town in Aurora and in Barangay Catmon in Sta. Maria town in Bulacan.

Based on the same report, jueteng was reported to be "negative" in Angeles City and in Bataan where STL was on its test run during the same period.

By April, police made jueteng raids in the City of San Fernando and Sto. Tomas town, also in Pampanga.

However, field reports said jueteng was being run in a more guerrilla manner.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Farmers told: Clean boots mean good crops

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Cordillera farmers had gotten used to wearing rubber boots while tending to their vegetable farms.

But International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) scientists in Los Baños, Laguna, said while the boots give comfort and protection, farmers must regularly wash them as their soles and edges could become means of transporting pathogens or disease-causing organisms.

Rhodesia Celoy-Manzan, an IRRI assistant scientist who specializes in molecular genetics, said rubber boots, when soiled and muddy, become potentially hazardous in moving potent organisms from farm to farm.

"The transport of these microbes could affect the natural balance between pathogenic (disease-causing) and beneficial organisms in the farmlands," she said.

"The uncleaned soil in the boots could introduce new pathogens that could tilt soil balance in favor of disease-causing microbes."

Once this happens, diseases



will later affect or destroy the plants, she said.

Speaking at a gathering of farmers at the Benguet State University here recently, Manzan said the region's vegetable farmers must see to it that their boots are thoroughly cleaned and washed when they return after a day's work or before they decide to move to another farm.

The advice goes to the province's close to 300,000 farmers in 13 towns.

Department of Agriculture records showed that 39,977 hectares of the province's total land area are devoted to agriculture with an annual average production of more or less 465,073.23 metric tons of vegetables.

CANCER-CAUSING Water district told to replace asbestos pipes

MAASIN CITY—SOUTHERN Leyte Rep. Roger Mercado has ordered the local water district to replace its asbestos pipes, saying these are carcinogenic.

But Gaudencio Alejandra, Maasin Water District (MWD) manager, said the agency has no funds to immediately replace these pipes.

He however said he did not see anything wrong with using asbestos pipes. "Unless it is inhaled, asbestos is safe."

Mercado said he was surprised

when he learned that the MWD had 5 km of asbestos pipes in the city's water system.

"It's (asbestos) carcinogenic. Cancer is the number one cause of death in the city and it may have something to do with it," Mercado told the Inquirer.

He said he could not understand why these pipes were not replaced when the use of asbestos materials had been banned.

Asked if he could use his Priority Development Assistant

Funds, Mercado replied "We have no funds for its replacement."

Alejandra said he had records that showed cancer was only the number four cause of death in the city, contrary to the claim of Mercado. The most common of these, he added, was breast cancer.

The pipes had been there since the 1960s, Alejandra said. "G.I. pipes were unavailable at that time and if there were these were too expensive."

Alejandra, however, said that every time they had money to improve the water system, they replaced the existing pipes with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipes.

He said he wanted to replace the asbestos pipes because these easily break.

Alejandra said they would replace the 5-km asbestos pipes if money was already available.

"Maybe by the end of this year, we could replace it," he added.

Jani Arnau, PDI Visayas Bureau

Palace tells Baguio flyover foes to start lobby

BAGUIO CITY—MALACANANG officials have advised three Baguio old timers to fight for the withdrawal of a city council supporting a controversial flyover project here.

President Macapagal-Arroyo last year instructed the Department of Public Works and Highways to realign funds meant for a flyover that was introduced to consume P44 million in savings left from the rehabilitation of the Marcos Highway.

But Palace chief of staff, Michael Defensor, said her instructions could not be fulfilled

because the terms of a loan that financed the highway's rehabilitation restricts its use to the project site.

Former Baguio Mayor Virginia de Guia, newspaper editor Cecile Afable and museum curator Leonora San Agustin, who are in their late 80s, picked the Marcos Highway during Ms. Arroyo's Holy Week visit on here to draw her attention.

The three old timers have been campaigning against the project since 2000 because the project would alter the aesthetics of the area.

De Guia, in particular, said DPWH was mistaken when it projected heavy traffic in the area to justify a flyover.

The Marcos Highway and Kennon Road, both major access routes to the summer capital, meet at a junction where the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center stands.

The DPWH earlier introduced a vehicular underpass project using the Marcos Highway savings, which would have linked the highway and Kennon Road. Environmental concerns compelled the agency to drop the project.

"There is nothing illegal about (the flyover project)," Defensor said.

So the Palace suggested that the three women undertake instead an intense lobby locally to attack the presumed social acceptability of the project, he told reporters here on Monday.

Defensor, a former environment secretary, said by reversing the council endorsement now, the government would have a legal basis for rethinking its flyover contract. Vincent Cabrera, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Army says NPA lost 143 cadres last year

LUCENA CITY—COMMUNIST NEW PEOPLE'S Army rebels operating in Bicol and Southern Tagalog lost a total of 143 cadres last year, the top official of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar here reported yesterday.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuy Jr., Solcom chief, claimed the figures represented the total number of guerrillas killed in combat or captured by government forces in Southern Luzon.

Cabuy said 782 NPA regulars and civilian allies surrendered as a result of the peace and reconciliation program of the government.

The military official said the figures were based on updated reports of the military intelligence, combat and civil-military services.

Solcom reported that 88 villages under the control or influence of the Communist Party of the Philippines in Southern Luzon, had been "de-influenced" as a result of socioeconomic and military operations.

The military claimed that based on its latest count, a total of 118 assorted firearms were seized from the insurgents in the two regions, long deemed bastions of the revolutionary movement.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal scoffed at the military figures.

"The figures were all drawings, products of the propaganda mills of the enemies. They were all part of the prevailing quota system in the military. Feeling the pressure, most officials in the field resort to fakery of statistics," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview. Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



AROLD ALMAGEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

SEA CREATURE

A boy watches from a pile of bamboo poles before he decides to jump into the Iloilo River for a swim with friends to fight off the heat of the dry months.

ROUNDUP

Runway repair urged

COTABATO CITY—Transportation officials were asked Tuesday to start the long-delayed rehabilitation of the runway of Maguindanao's Awang Airport. At present, the landing aircraft control pebbles and sand grains from the runway's asphalt potholes. Maguindanao Rep. Siman Datumanong said the rehabilitation would have been part of the unused Asian Development Bank loan program for airport projects in Luzon and Mindanao. Datumanong said the loan agreement had been cancelled because of the government's failure to provide local equity. He said the Department of Transportation and Communications revived the rehabilitation plan by asking Congress to provide an additional P25 million to its P40-million budget. But he said the DOTC had yet to start the work. Datumanong said if the project was delayed further, he would call on DOTC officials, including Secretary Usandro Mendoza, to explain. Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Soft drinks plant robbed

CAMP DREGO SILANG, San Fernando City—Fifteen men in black police uniforms and bulletproof vests barged early Monday into a soft drinks plant in Rosario, La Union, and took more than P4 million in cash and checks. Police said the men arrived in a black Isuzu Trooper at the Pepsi-Cola plant in Barangay Udian at about 1:20 a.m. One of them told the guard that his group was inspecting the facilities. When the guard demanded the group's mission order, one of the visitors poked his Armalite rifle at him, took his service pistol and locked him in the guard house. The other gunmen barged into the building where the plant's main office is. Some employees were then making an accounting of sales and collection the previous day.

Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

5 drown in Isabela

ILAGAN, Isabela—Five people drowned on Black Saturday in separate places in Isabela, belated police reports said. The victims were Emmagrace Berras, 53, her daughter Vanessa, 15, and granddaughter Jovy, 5, all of Ilagan town; Beverly Rivera, 11, of Angadanan town; and Ma. Rica Teresa Garcia, 5, of Santiago City. The Berras girls were swimming in the Pinacanan River when they were swept away by strong current. Emmagrace tried to save them but also drowned. Rivera drowned while taking a bath in the river in Barangay Allangigan in Angadanan, while Garcia drowned at the Batai-Nagas-sican River in Santiago City. William Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Cooperative exec killed

CITY OF MALABOS—An official of a cooperative here was shot and killed by unidentified men in Barangay Calvaria in Meycauayan on Monday, police said. Medel Medalla, 50, of the San Pablo Multi-purpose Cooperative and watchman in Barangay San Pablo, was riding on a motorcycle in Meycauayan when he was shot in the head and chest. Sources from the cooperative said Medalla had earlier survived a recent assassination attempt in Guiguinto town. Police have yet to determine if the victim was killed because of his work as cooperative official or as village watchman. Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Arson suspect's sketch out

LEGASPI CITY—The Bureau of Fire Protection has released a sketch of one of the suspected arsonists behind the series of fires here. The sketch was based on the description given by three witnesses working in the burnt establishments. Mayor Noel Rosel announced a P50,000 reward for those who can identify and capture the suspect. Chief Insp. Gilbert Delot, city fire marshal, said the BFP joined forces with the National Bureau of Investigation, the police and the Armed Forces in solving the case. Ephraim Agalar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Aklan awardee

FORMER Assemblyman Jose Tumbokon has been named Outstanding Aklanon Awardee for Public Service in the province's 50th year celebration on April 25. Gov. Carlito Marquez announced that the accolade was committee's decision. Tumbokon's award caps 50 years of public service. He started his career as messenger, rose through the ranks and served as chief of office before he became assemblyman and presidential adviser. He was appointed minister of state of Information and official spokesperson of the Interim Batasan Pambansa and the Kilusang Bagoing Lipunan during the Marcos regime.

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Business + IT = job comes easy

Most campus crimes involve rape and fraternity-related violence

By Alculin Papa

THE MAJORITY OF CRIMES committed by students in Metro Manila last year involved rape and fraternity-related violence, a civic group said yesterday.

Citing statistics from the Philippine National Police, Arsenio Organo, chair of a group called Pugged Lawin, said 28 of every 100 reported crimes committed by students involved rape and 35 were related to physical injuries. The

balance involved petty crimes like theft, acts of lasciviousness, vandalism, etc.

"We believe these cases of physical injuries involve fraternity-related violence. But we are also concerned with the number of rape cases," Organo told reporters at a news forum in Quezon City.

Organo said his group had not been able to obtain statistics on drug-related crimes involving students, but "we have a feeling

the numbers here will be high, too."

Organo's group is involved in a new program aimed at curbing campus violence by organizing students. The undertaking, called Student Crime Prevention Network (SCPN), involves the Department of Education, the National Police Commission, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Commission on Higher Education and other civic groups.

Dr. Lillian Enriquez of the CHED-National Capital Region told the forum that the SCPN would bring parents, students and school officials together to organize crime-prevention councils in schools throughout the country. The councils will ensure that campuses are "safe, secure, peaceful and conducive to the physical, mental and emotional well-being of students."

Among the duties of the councils are reporting crimes, formu-

lating prevention programs and holding information drives.

"Students are most vulnerable to crimes. So they should take an active role in crime prevention," Enriquez said. She said that the councils would target fraternity-related violence, incidences of pornography, homosexuality, alcoholism and drugs.

While she said that there had been crimes perpetrated by teachers on students, these are just a "handful." She

lamented that there was a lack of training of teachers in values education.

Dr. Virginia Silvestre of the DepEd-National Capital Region said efforts were under way to integrate crime prevention into the basic education curriculum. But she pointed out that other modules like solid waste management, drug education, reproductive health and HIV education required equal time and space in the curriculum.

Fil-Am starts LIFE, vows to plant 1M trees

From page A1

LIFE will develop modules detailing the value of the project and the proper way of planting and caring for various tree species, including mangroves, for distribution to its stakeholders.

200,000 trees a year

LIFE is aiming for 200,000 trees a year.

A backyard, a subdivision, a park, a private resort, a mountain, denuded forest land—any open space that is not prone to logging or commercial use of timber—are sites being considered by LIFE.

The group is also seeking communities that are sincerely interested in saving their natural resources, Eusebio said.

La Salle intends to transfer responsibility over the project to the communities after three years.

"We need more than a million trees. For our part, we just want to be able to look back and say we planted a million and we did it for Mother Earth," Eusebio said.

The man carries the burden of doing something for the planet right in his homeland.

US environment agency

"I worked for a polluter for 10 years," said Eusebio, recalling his stint in the chemical industry in the United States after receiving his master's degree in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts In-



LIFE staff members teach barangay officials in Pandacan, Manila, how to use a compass and GPS for profiling.

stitute of Technology.

Eusebio then spent the next 30 years with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He was head of a team of scientists developing pollution control devices with the National Air Pollution Administration, the EPA's predecessor.

When the EPA was created, Eusebio was assigned to its regional office and spent most of his years in Washington D.C., developing regulations and federal environmental programs for the states.

Soon Eusebio flew to Indonesia to do various environmental projects, including saving Lake Tondano, and

other consultancy jobs. He, however, found himself looking to do more.

"I've earned many dollars doing reports that get stuck in the shelf because you don't have the people who will do it," Eusebio said.

Pilot project in Lumban

Returning to the Philippines upon the prodding of La Salle Br. Armin Lustro FSC, the man found the people he needed in the barangays of Lumban, Laguna.

Lumban's 16 barangays are the pilot project site for LIFE's adopted watershed. Building on its brick-by-brick concept of environmental preserva-

tion, LIFE chose one of the 24 sub-basins—the Lumban-Pagsanjan sub-basin.

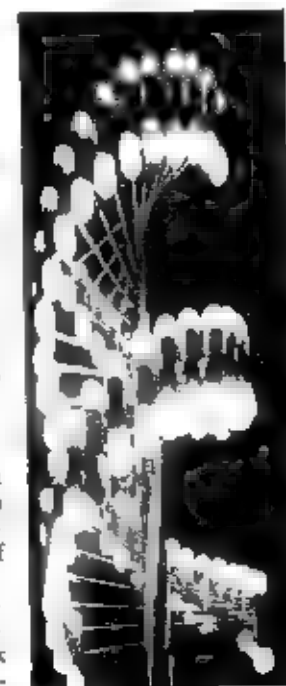
LIFE has trained the barangay leaders of Lumban to profile their barangays. With a compass, a line meter and sometimes a global position system (GPS) device, the officials, housewives and fishermen surveyed their areas for the barangay profile map.

The maps will be used for the natural resource management plan and help the barangay leaders identify and address the causes of frequent problems in the community.

The profile maps show the fishpens, hand pumps, houses, plantations, ricefields, pigeries, churches and other landmarks in the barangay.

"This is the thrust of LIFE. To bring education to the barangays, to people who may never have entered a classroom but who know life all too well," Eusebio said.

"The satisfaction is in seeing people who know nothing of what you do, holding them by the hand and seeing them become experts," he said.



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2 Filipinos 'admitted' Saudi slays, says DFA

From page A1

Filipinos as "accessories" in the gruesome crime.

The alleged accessories were also being held by Saudi police, who at one point had taken in up to "52 Filipinos" for questioning, the DFA said in a statement. Of the 52, six were women.

The DFA said that of the six people who went missing, three were confirmed dead while the others were among the Filipinos who were rounded up.

The three who were mistakenly reported as missing were in good physical condition when found in detention by consulate officials.

The DFA continued to withhold the names of those arrested and of those declared missing.

Meeting with investigators

Philippine Consul General Pen-dosina Lomondot was scheduled yesterday to meet with Saudi investigators for the identification of the body parts.

The Philippine consulate in Jeddah said up to 52 Filipinos had been detained by police as of April 17. It was not immediately clear how many were still being held as of yesterday.

Human body parts inside black garbage plastic bags were found in Sina'alah district south of Jeddah on April 4.

The discovery led Saudi po-

lice to pick up a large number of Filipino workers in the city. An Inquirer source in Jeddah earlier estimated that more than 100 Filipinos, including businessmen, were held for questioning.

Saudi ambassador summoned

Earlier yesterday, the "mass arrest" in the city prompted the DFA to summon the Saudi ambassador over human rights concerns.

Ambassador Mohammed Ameen Mohammed Wali met with acting Foreign Secretary Rafael Seguis, who conveyed the concerns of President Macapagal-Arroyo over the arrests.

Seguis also said that the Philip-

pine consulate should be granted access to the detainees in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

The DFA statement was silent on the possible motive for the killings. Earlier, the Inquirer source said members of the Filipino community in Jeddah were inclined to believe that a turf war over the illegal drug trade could have been behind the carnage.

Drugs, lottery and liquor

The consulate said the man-hunt for the suspects was conducted alongside an investigation of drug trafficking, underground lottery and illegal consumption of liquor.

A report early this week in the Arabian daily Okaz said one of the suspects revealed where the victims' bodies were dumped—an area called Industrial City in southern Jeddah.

The report added that the recovered of body parts bore signs of torture.

The murders, the paper said, were carried out in a house in the Ghulail District east of the Jeddah-Mecca highway.

Updates

Malacañang said it wanted to know the whos and whys of the crime.

"Like the rest of the Filipino people, we all want to know the motive and identify the

suspects involved in these gruesome [murders]. The government shall continue to work closely with the Saudi authorities to ensure that no stone is left unturned in the investigation," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

He assured the public of updates on the case.

"As President Arroyo has instructed, the public will be updated every step of the way. In the meantime, we appeal to the media and other sectors concerned to refrain from speculating and await the final result of the probe," Bunye said. With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Stove fueled by 'tuba-tuba' launched in Leyte

From page A1

oil stove for over a year now, said the new stove was not only user-friendly but efficient and affordable.

The stove cooks food faster than traditional stoves. "It takes only about 20 minutes to cook rice with the oil plant stove, while with a kerosene stove this usually takes about 30 minutes," Baaga said.

Launching

A single-burner plant oil stove costs P2,000 while a two-burner costs P3,400. But the stove's local distributor has been selling the stove at a 25-percent discount until the end of the month, while those who joined the field test of the product like Balaga were given a 50-percent discount.

Protos was officially launched in Leyte on April 6, with German Ambassador Axel Weisshaupt, BHS officials and experts from Germany in attendance.

Also present were Leyte Representatives Carmen Cari (5th district) and Remedios Petilla (1st district), Gov. Carlos Jericho Petilla, LSU president Dr. Paciencia Milan and regional directors of government agencies.

BHS officials said that aside from providing people with a low-cost stove and livelihood opportunities, Protos could help some 2.5 billion people worldwide who still cook their food over open fires.

Millions die every year as a result of indoor pollution caused by, among other things, open-fire cooking, according to the World Health Organization.

Oil from plants burns without

harming a person's health because it is carbon dioxide-neutral, according to BSH officials.

Another environmental problem that the new stove could address is the cutting of trees. It is estimated that a family could use up to two tons of wood per year.

Sustainable development

Claus-Peter Hutter, president of the international foundation European Nature Heritage Fund (Euronatur) that helped fund the development of Protos, said the BHS plant oil stove project "contributes to public health, to environmental education, to sustainable development, and to the protection of biological diversity."

He said Protos was a good example of a tangible, concrete contribution of a private corporation

to sustainable development.

The field test for the stove was undertaken in Leyte from November 2004 until last month, with the Leyte State University (LSU), a partner of the BHS, overseeing the testing. The test covered some 100 households and small restaurants.

Results of the tests showed that users liked the stove.

The introduction of Protos in the province has provided livelihoods to people marketing the stove and to those involved in its production because most of its parts are locally produced. BHS produces only the "technically delicate" stove burner.

Oil processing center

The production of plant oils for the stove is also providing additional income to some local farmers.

In Barangay Ciabu, about 20 km from Baybay town proper, the Ciabu Primary Multipurpose Cooperative runs a small-scale oil processing center whose financing comes mostly from the LSU-based Plant Oil Technology Center.

Representative Cari and Baybay Mayor Carlos Cari funded the project while cooperative members provided free labor.

The center, which has a capacity to produce about 130 liters of oil per day, is selling coconut oil to users of the stove for P12 per liter, P100 per gallon and P500 for a 5-gallon container.

The price is lower than kerosene, which sells for at least P36 a liter, and refined oil, which is retailed at P35 a liter.

A few meters from the baran-

gay proper of Ciabu, the cooperative has a plantation of Jatropha, which is locally known as "tuba-tuba," another source of plant oil.

The Department of Energy is encouraging the planting of Jatropha as part of its measures to cushion the impact of record world oil prices. The PNOC Energy Development Corp. said the plant's 37-percent oil content could be used as a substitute for diesel fuel.

"The demand for alternative renewable energy sources is growing rapidly particularly in developing countries, where cost-effective energy is critical for poverty alleviation and economic development," said Leonardo Subbauea, regional executive director for Eastern Visayas of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

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Palace orders immediate implementation of ID system

From page A1

number for quick reference and profiling.

He said that government agencies would make it mandatory for all individuals dealing with them to use the national ID to facilitate their transactions. "We would also encourage the private sector to do the same," said Defensor.

On Wednesday, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the national ID system under Executive Order No. 420 and rejected claims that it violated an individual's right to privacy.

Andres Bautista, dean of the Far Eastern University Institute of Law, said the court decision was a good one because it ruled the ID system was not compulsory and that any information requested was already available in the public domain.

Phantom fears

Bunye hailed the Supreme Court decision "not only because of its contribution to national security but its effect in facilitating the delivery of vital government programs and services to the Filipino people."

"Issues advertising to infringement of human rights are phantom fears," said Bunye. "The system has enough safeguards to protect the citizen from imagined violations of the right to privacy."

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno told the Inquirer that there was no need to gather data at the barangay level. He said that any data needed was already in the hands of the government, such as the GIS, Comeler and the Land Transportation Office.

"Privacy and privileged personal information will not lose their legal protection under existing laws as a consequence of the Supreme Court decision," Puno said.

When the national ID system was first proposed as an instrument against terrorism, information gathered from the barangays was planned to form its database.

Now, Puno said, the DILG would only be a support organization for the ID project.

"What is imminent is the con-



MS ARROYO

solidation of the ID cards of the different agencies. I don't think we will do data-gathering on anyone," Puno said. He said that the National Census and Statistical Office could handle the consolidation.

'For people in gov't'

In Lapulapu City, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the high court's decision did not cover private citizens as the government had intended.

"The national ID sustained by the Supreme Court is really for the moment to facilitate administrative aspects for people in the government, especially in transacting business with the government," said Ermita, who was attending the three-day international conference on counterterrorism.

He emphasized the importance of a national ID system especially in the fight against criminality, insurgency and terrorism. But he denied claims by human rights advocates the project would be used to harass individuals and violate their privacy.

Gradual rise of police state

The leftist group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan said it would soon be necessary for all citizens to get an ID. He said it may be required whenever they transact business with the gov-

IN THE KNOW

Unified multipurpose ID system

IN APRIL 2005, President Macapagal-Arroyo signed Executive Order No. 420, which "requires all government-owned and -controlled corporations to streamline and harmonize their identification systems."

The EO provides guidelines for the adoption of a "unified multipurpose identification system for government" by all government agencies and GOCCs that issue ID cards to their members.

Militant groups opposed the EO, fearing that a national ID system would amount to invasion of privacy, violation of human rights and curtailment of civil liberties.

Those pushing for the establishment of a national ID system believe it will reduce the costs of having multiple ID cards and of the maintenance of redundant databases, make government transactions more convenient, and help in anti-crime and antiterrorism campaigns.

Government, such as applying for various licenses and registering to engage in business.

"We are now seeing the gradual rise of a police state and the evolution of the real Orwellian Big Brother: Freedom-loving citi-

The data to be collected for the national ID card include the holder's name, home address, sex, picture, signature, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, names of parents, height, weight, prints of two index fingers and two thumbs, any prominent distinguishing features like moles, as well as tax identification number.

The signing of the EO came in the wake of a Social Weather Stations survey saying that 6 out of 10 Filipinos approved of a national ID system because it would combat terrorism.

Earlier pushed by then President Fidel Ramos as part of the government's security and counterinsurgency measures, the proposal for a national ID system was shot down by the Supreme Court in 1998.

The tribunal ruled that the system posed a "clear and present danger" and would violate the right to privacy guaranteed by the Constitution. **Kate Padilla, PDI Research**

zens must act now to defend their rights, including the right to privacy," Reyes said. With reports from Norman Bordadora, Philip C. Tubesa and Jolene R. Bulambog, PDI Visayas Bureau

Aussies launch aid program

DAVAO CITY—THE AUSTRALIAN government yesterday launched a multimillion-dollar aid program to help disadvantaged children in the South.

Called "The Children Friendly Movement," the five-year \$17-million program is being funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (Ausaid) and run jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef).

The program will focus on 10 local government areas on the islands of Mindanao and Samar.

"The Australian Government is pleased to continue its partnership with Unicef in promoting the welfare of Filipino children," Australian Ambassador Tony Hely said.

"We have been partners since 1989 and this new Australian funding reaffirms our commitment to helping the Philippines."

Australia has been the largest donor to Unicef's country program for children in the past six years.

"Compared to the rest of the Philippines, the children of Mindanao and especially those in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) continue to face stark inequalities and disparities brought about by a host of issues, such as poverty, malnutrition, lack of basic education, trafficking and other forms of abuse," said Unicef's country representative Nicholas Alipui. **AFP**

BCDA

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

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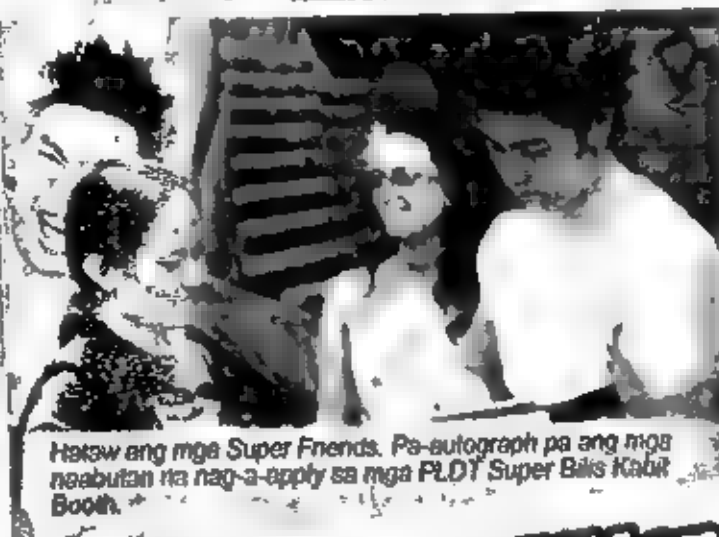
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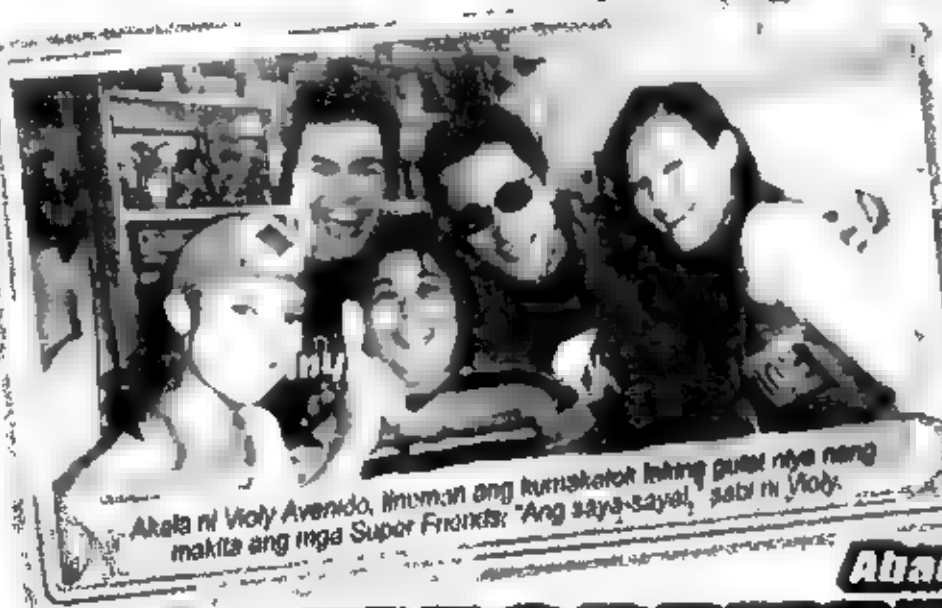


Hatw ang mga Super Friends. Pa-autograph pa ang mga nabutan na nag-a-apply sa mga PLDT Super Bilis Kabit Booth.



Hayan, apply na agad ang mga taga-Cebu para 48 hours lang may PLDT landline na sila na may Super Powers pa!

**Superlaking ngiti nila dahil may PLDT Landline agad sila.
Tawag agad para laging masaya!**



Akala ni Violy Avenida, hinuman ang kumakataw ng laging puwa niya nang makita ang mga Super Friends. "Ang saya-saya," sabi ni Violy.



"Bilis-kabit tologat! Kanhang unaga lang ako nag-apply, ngayon may PLDT landline na ako," binanggit nang sabi ni Nimfa Ipong ng Cebu.

Abangan ang PLDT Bilis-Kabit sa inyong lugar!

MAGPAKABIT NA! NOW NA!

Aplus

METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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- Not sweet news for chocolate factory /A24



WATCHMEN found the bodies of Melchor Vergel de Dios and an unidentified companion inside a car parked near the Ever Gotesco mall in Quezon City early yesterday morning.

Designer, pal found dead in car

Torture signs evident

By DJ Yap

THE BODIES OF A FASHION DESIGNER and an unidentified companion were found inside a car parked near the Ever Gotesco Mall on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City early yesterday morning.

Melchor Vergel de Dios, 36, and another man were discovered at 6:20 a.m. at the back portion of a silver Ford Lynx, according to police. The fashion designer, a first cousin of Angelito Vergel de Dios, executive director of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Traffic Operations Center, was found with his head wrapped in a white plastic bag. A cord was also tied around his neck. The other victim's hands and feet were bound by a leather-like material, police said.

The cause of death was not immediately clear, but police said De Dios had several wounds on the head and bruises all over the body. His companion also sustained bruises. De Dios was lying on his belly at the back seat, while the other man was slumped on

investigator PO2 Leo Nino Pasco. The unidentified victim was in his early 30s, between 5'6" and 5'8" in height, sporting a flat top haircut, and wore a black shirt and short denim pants, Pasco said.

Left behind

The sports utility vehicle (plate number WNG-978), owned by De Dios, was parked at the outer lane, fronting a bank and furniture shop, before mall watchmen found the victims' bodies as they were making the rounds, Pasco said. Found at the scene were a bloodstained steel pipe, two kitchen knives and De Dios' identification card.

Quezon City police criminal investigation division chief Supt. Procopio Lipana said De Dios was last seen alive at 1:50 a.m. by his driver, whom he dropped off at Quezon Avenue. He had attended a seminar on labor issues with other fashion designers in Makati City that night, Lipana added.

The victim's brother and sister identified De Dios after police called the emergency numbers on his ID. Angelito described his cousin as "a quiet, soft-spoken



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Armed men nabbed after brief chase

Police suspect they are car thieves

By Luigi A. del Puerto

TWO MEN THE POLICE WANTED TO question about a car without a Land Transportation Office (LTO) sticker got into more trouble when they yielded two handguns after leading the authorities on a short chase early yesterday in Quezon City.

The police raised the possibility that the men could be members of a notorious car theft syndicate.

Christian Lim and Nino Jotie, both residents of Quezon City, did not resist when cornered but denied involvement in any criminal activity, according to Chief Inspector Hansel Marantan, officer in charge of Task Force Limbas.

TF Limbas is the anti-car theft arm of the Philippine National Police-Traffic Management Group, the unit that got embroiled in a controversy last year after a television crew showed footage of its men shooting at three immobilized suspects in Pasig City.

"We never stopped building a case against this group," Marantan said, referring to the Valle Verde Gang, which the police said stole, sometimes by force, about 22 vehicles within just three months last year. Acting on a tip, the police scoured Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City around 1:30 a.m. Thursday in search of two men on board a white Suzuki Esteem with Plate No. WAV-950.

The informant warned the police the men could be armed. The police spotted the car at White Plains subdivision an hour after midnight Thursday. The car had no LTO sticker, indicating it had not yet been registered.

"We flagged them down near the Shell station on Katipunan Avenue, but instead of stopping, they stepped on the gas," Marantan said. The two also ignored the red light twice—first at the corner of Santolan-Katipunan and then at the Santolan-Edsa intersection. They were finally cornered near the gate of Camp Crame, headquarters of the PNP.

Marantan said that while the men denied any involvement in car thefts, one of their phones revealed text messages showing they were linked to a son of a well-in-do family in Metro Manila who was earlier implicated in car theft.

More cases

The men also allegedly knew the three suspected car thieves killed in a shootout in Pasig City in November, according to Marantan.

Data from the TMG showed that car theft cases rose sharply in January this year compared to the same period last year.

A total of 193 cars were stolen, 35 of them forcibly, as of January 2006, compared to only 146 during the same month last year.



SUSPECTS Nino Jotie and Christian Lim on their way to police headquarters for questioning.

BF gates controversy heats up

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE FEUD BETWEEN THE PARANAQUE City government and the United BF Homeowners Association Inc. (UBPHAI) over BF Homes gates is hardly over.

Mayor Florencio Bernabe ordered on Wednesday city police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles to investigate alleged harassment by the UBPHAI of homeowners and motorists.

Nelson Lacambra, Bernabe's spokesperson, said several residents and motorists complained to the mayor that UBPHAI guards told them to buy car stickers from the association or they would be barred from the subdivision.

"Car stickers are sold at P150 to residents and P1,200 to outsiders," he told the Inquirer yesterday.

Early this month, the Court of Appeals issued a writ of preliminary injunction returning to the UBPHAI control over the eight gates leading to the subdivision.

The injunction ordered the local government to suspend enforcement of Ordinance 00-15 until its validity was established.

The ordinance, passed in 2000, opened to the public subdivision roads linked to major city thoroughfares.

Alexander Villaraza, a non-resident, said in a letter to the mayor that UBPHAI guards stopped him twice—on El Grande and Elizalde Avenues—and told him to secure a car sticker by April 11 or he would not be able to enter the subdivision.

A resident, who did not want to be named, said guards stopped him twice two weeks ago at the gate and told him to renew his car sticker, even after he told the guards his sticker was still valid.

2-hour fire hits army buildings at Fort Bonifacio

By Dona Pazzibugan

DOZENS OF FIREARMS WERE destroyed after a fire hit two buildings inside the Army headquarters building at Fort Bonifacio before dawn yesterday.

Army officials were quick to rule out arson. A spokesperson said initial findings showed the two-hour blaze was caused by faulty electrical wiring.

The fire broke out at 3:15 a.m. at the 9th Ready Reserve Division headquarters building and then spread to the adjacent Regional Command Defense Group building, according to Army spokesperson Maj. Bartolome Bacarro. The fire was put out around 5 a.m. without any reported injuries.

An initial inventory indicated that at least 30 M14 and M16 rifles were destroyed inside an armory attached to the 9th Ready Reserve Division building while about 57 other firearms were salvaged from the fire, said Bacarro.

He said investigators are still determining how many firearms were destroyed at the adjacent building of the Regional Command Defense Group.

"We are ruling out sabotage. A security guard saw an electric spark at the 9th RR building before the fire. Initial investigation points to faulty electrical wiring," Bacarro said.

Meanwhile a fire also broke out in a public market on Real Street in Las Piñas City shortly after 3 a.m. Destroyed were two of the three buildings that made up the market.

The Aragon Building, a commercial complex was owned by Rodolfo Aragon, while Poblacion Market was owned by Esperanza Yu, said Deputy Fire Marshal Aldwin Salazar. City fire marshal Senior Insp. Robert Pacis said a short circuit in one of the stalls could have triggered the fire.

With a report by Jocelyn R. Uy



SOLDIERS look for items that could still be used after a pre-dawn fire broke out at army headquarters yesterday.

LTFRB warns operators vs unauthorized fare hikes

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COUNTRY'S CHIEF PUBLIC TRANSPORT regulator has warned bus, jeepney and taxi operators and drivers against unilaterally hiking the fares they charge their passengers.

In a statement sent to the media, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) chair Ma. Elena Bautista said her agency "will make sure no operator effects any fare increase without board approval."

Her comments come amid rising calls from driver and operators of public utility vehicles for another round of fare increases, after fuel prices resumed their upward trek in recent weeks.

No formal fare hike petitions have yet been filed after the latest round of fuel price increases, although regulators have already received reports that some jeepney and bus operators have begun raising their fares unilaterally.

"We appeal to operators and drivers to observe fares prescribed by LTFRB," Bautista said. "Any moves to ask for increase will have to be thoroughly studied and subjected to the usual public hearing." The LTFRB chair added that President Macapagal-Arroyo and Transportation and Communications Sec. Leandro Mendoza have ordered a crackdown on PU operators which violate existing fare ceilings.

"Drivers and operators who overcharge must be reported to LTFRB hotline 0921-4487777 or DOTC hotline 7890," said Bautista.

Pasig chocolate factory closed

By Edison C. Tandoc Jr.

A CHOCOLATE FACTORY IN PASIG CITY was forcibly closed by the local government yesterday afternoon following complaints from its neighbors.

Security guards initially refused to let a small team inside the more than 50-year-old plant of the Universal Robina Corporation (URC) producing chocolates, wafers and biscuits in Barangay Bagong Ilog.

Officers from the City Legal Office and City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) used an acetylene torch to cut a hole in the steel door and a steel ladder to climb up the main gate.

The closure order served by the team said, "The plant is ordered closed including all machinery and equipment, which are the sources of odor pollution until the respondent company has abated and controlled the odor."

CENRO's Raquel Naciongayo said about 200 families living around the plant complained about the annoying odor months ago.

Some complained of respiratory and skin disorders.

Naciongayo said the company failed to honor agreements reached during public hearings.

Emission tests

The closure order said results of emission tests "revealed that (the plant) failed the sulfur dioxide standard for clean air."

"We have been suffering for more than three years," said Renato de Guzman.

"The odor is really disgusting and they operate round the clock, even at midnight," he added.

De Guzman is a board member of the Kawit Homeowners Association that initiated the complaint.

The plant manufactures Nips Chocolates, Cream-O and Presto Cream, among others.

Naciongayo said the plant would remain closed until the company installed proper anti-pollution devices.

The raiding team, led by legal officer Carlos Abesamis, turned off the boiler that supplied the steam to power the equipment.

The boiler lacked proper anti-pollution devices to filter soot and other pollutants, Naciongayo said.

Job concerns

A 54-year-old factory worker expressed the concern of more than 500 plant employees about their jobs.

Following the closure, the management of URC faxed a statement to the Inquirer yesterday. The latest test conducted last month by a DENR-accredited laboratory showed that the plant had passed all air emission standards, according to the statement.

It added: "Under the Clean Air Act, the sole authority to issue closure orders is vested in the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB), which is chaired by the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) secretary."

No authority

"No local government has the authority to issue a closure order under this law," the statement said.

Whether or not the local government had the authority to close down a plant, the order in question had been issued "prematurely because all parties are still waiting for the results of the latest test conducted by the DENR itself. Based on the foregoing, URC believes the closure of its plant is unjustified and has no legal basis."

The URC management said it would ask Pasig officials to lift the order subject since it had no legal basis, and also "to protect the roughly 900 workers of the plant whose employment will be unduly affected."

METROBRIEFS

Trader shot dead in QC

A BUSINESSMAN was gunned down in broad daylight by unidentified men the other day in Quezon City. Eliso Somera, 59, and his wife Nanette were on board a Suzuki multi-cab in front of North Olympus gate along Zabarta Road in Novaliches when four suspects suddenly appeared behind them, police said. Brandishing handguns, the men began shooting at the victim repeatedly, hitting him in different parts of the body, according to a report by Investigator SP01 Demosthanes Rebanco. Somera was rushed to the Bernardino Hospital, but he was declared dead on arrival. The suspects quickly left the scene by taking over a car being driven by Alexander Tanael, Rebanco said. The suspects abandoned their getaway vehicle when they reached Quirino Highway, police said.

DJ Yap

4 suspected bookies arrested

IN AN INTENSIFIED drive to stop the unauthorized betting on horse races, agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) arrested four suspects engaged in the illegal activity last Tuesday in Manila. The suspected bookies were identified as Rommel Arce, of Tramo Street, Putul, Kavit, Cavite; Roberto Cahilig Jr. of No. 1926 Anak Bayan St. Malate Manila; and Janete Capundan, of No. 159 Singalang St., Malate, Manila. The NBI agents also arrested Fernando Perez, of No. 1132 P. Zapanta St. Malate, Manila, for allegedly participating in the illegal betting. "We are serious in conducting operations against this illegal betting because the government loses billions yearly in unpaid taxes," NBI Special Task Force chief Reynaldo Esmeralda said. The three male suspects were arrested at the corner of F. Muñoz and P. Zapanta Streets in Malate while Capundan was nabbed in Ermita. The suspects face charges for violation of Republic Act 9287 or an act increasing the penalties for illegal number games. Esmeralda said. The NBI had arrested and charged 71 suspects, including gambling employees, bookies and bettors, earlier this month. Alleged gambling operators Venancio "Apeng" Sy and Ferdie Sy were also charged for reportedly masterminding and financing the betting operations. The Sys remain at large. Esmeralda said he has written officials of the Philippine Racing Commission (Philracom) to cancel the registration of Venancio's race horses.

Margaux G. Ortiz



ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Divine Mercy feast day

THE ARCHDIOCESEAN Shrine of Nuestra Señora de Guila in Ermita, Manila will celebrate the feast of the Divine Mercy with a Holy Mass at 10 a.m., Sunday, April 23. Celebrant is Rev. Fr. Sanjay de Claro, Shrine Pastor. The nine-day novena in honor of the Divine Mercy, which started Friday, April 14, also ends on Sunday.

Book sale at Instituto Cervantes

BE PREPARED for a day of books and roses at Instituto Cervantes' Open House and Día del Libro FIESTA (International Book Day) celebration this Saturday, April 22. Following the tradition during the Day of the Book in Spain, a rose will be given as a gift to every book buyer. Starting at 10 a.m., visitors can tour the new Instituto Cervantes building along T.M. Kalaw St. in Manila, participate in the Poetry Reading Contest, watch free movie showings with the theme "Great Books on Screen," and view the exhibit entitled "The Famed Don Quixote: Posters from Don Quijote movies." Instituto Cervantes will end Día del Libro FIESTA (International Book Day) with flamenco dances, lively music, a Latin band, and lots of Spanish food. For more information, call Instituto Cervantes at 5261482 or visit their website at <http://manila.cervantes.es>.

Ospital ng Maynila opens Monday

THE OSPITAL ng Maynila (OsMa) Medical Center will resume operations on Monday. The Manila government, which runs the hospital, made the announcement yesterday, saying the Manila Electric Co. has asked for more time to install a newly arrived electric transformer. "The hospital should have resumed operations today but the electric company has requested for an extension to optimize operations," city officials said. They added that patients will continue to be accommodated at other city-owned hospitals such as the Ospital ng Sampaloc Medical Center, Ospital ng Tondo in Abad Santos and Gai Andres Bonifacio in Del Pan. The hospital shut down on April 12 to give way to the rehabilitation and modernization of its main power supply.

Tha G. Santos

Japan, S. Korea race to avert possible clash over islets row

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—JAPANESE AND South Korean negotiators raced to avert a clash over a set of disputed islets on Thursday as Seoul accused Tokyo of neocolonial ambitions and warned of a possible confrontation at sea.

Behind-the-scenes talks on a diplomatic solution came even as tensions mounted over a Japanese plan to survey resource-rich waters near the islands, which are occupied by South Korea but claimed by Japan.

Some 20 South Korean gunboats have been dispatched to the area in anticipation of the arrival of Japanese survey ships. The ships were scheduled to conduct high seas seizure drills Thursday, but delayed the exercises due to bad weather, said Jang Soo-pyo, a South Korean Coast Guard official.

In Seoul, foreign ministry spokesperson Choo Kyu-ho warned of the possibility of a clash and said Japan held the "key" to preventing conflict.

President Roh Moo-hyun meanwhile underscored the Korean protests by accusing Tokyo

of harboring imperialistic ambitions. Many South Koreans consider Japan's claim a result of its 1910-45 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

"There are some people claiming territorial rights to former colonies that were once acquired through a war of aggression," Roh said in a speech at a breakfast prayer meeting of Christian leaders in Seoul.

"We are now in a difficult situation," he said. "Problems cannot be solved just by goodwill, and we need wisdom and courage."

In Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe said there had been "unofficial" contacts between the two sides, following media reports that Tokyo had offered to halt the survey if Seoul dropped efforts to add or change place names in the area.

Abe, however, said Japan planned to go ahead with the project.

"The Japanese coast guard is carrying out preparations to conduct a maritime survey that is based on international law," he said. "A calm

response is necessary, and unofficial contacts between Japan and South Korea are taking place with the aim of a peaceful resolution."

Two survey ships left port on Japan's west coast on Wednesday but have been lingering offshore since, Coast Guard official Masayuki Fujita said. News reports said the survey may begin later Thursday.

The rocky outcroppings, called Dokdo by Koreans and Takeshima in Japan, are surrounded by rich fishing waters and both countries claim the area as part of their exclusive economic zones.

Korea Gas Corp. estimates the area has also enough methane hydrate deposits to meet South Korean natural gas demands for 30 years. It plans to start drilling in the region next year to assess the size of the deposits.

Foreign Minister Tarō Aso told an upper house foreign and defense affairs committee Thursday that the survey is allowed under international laws and that Japan needs to do it to protect national interests.



SOUTH Korean protesters shout slogans as they burn anti-Japanese banners at a rally in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, April 20. The group assailed Japan's plan to send survey ships near the disputed islands, called Dokdo in Korean and Takeshima in Japanese.

WORLD BRIEFS

Hu gears up for tough US talks

SEATTLE, Washington—Chinese President Hu Jintao is scheduled to travel to the US capital Washington Wednesday to hold tough talks with President George W. Bush and US officials on currency, trade, Iran, and human rights. The cautious and image-conscious leader carefully planned his first official US visit with by stopping in Seattle, Washington, a state that has booming trade and a surplus with China, to fend off expected criticism over its "unfair" trade practices and "undervalued" currency. Following a tour of the Microsoft campus in Redmond Tuesday, Hu said China will also "seriously keep its promise" to step up copyright protection, another thorny issue in US-China relations.

First list of Gitmo detainees released

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—The US government released the most extensive list yet of the hundreds of detainees who have been held at the Guantanamo Bay prison—nearly all labeled enemy combatants, but only a handful of whom have faced formal charges. In all, 558 people were named in the list provided by the Pentagon on Wednesday in response to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit by The Associated Press. They were among the first swept up for suspected links to al-Qaida or the ousted Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The list is the first official roster of Guantanamo detainees who passed through the Combatant Status Review Tribunal process in 2004 and 2005 to determine whether they should be deemed "enemy combatants." Those named are from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and 39 other countries. Many have been held at the US prison at Guantanamo Bay for more than four years.

Mumps epidemic spreads in US

IOWA CITY, Iowa—in the largest mumps outbreak in the United States in more than 20 years, almost 1,000 people have contacted the disease in the Midwest, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta announced Wednesday. The epidemic began in Iowa, where the State Department of Public Health has reported 815 suspected or confirmed cases. It has spread to at least seven other states. So far, no one has died from the disease, a flu-like viral infection that causes swelling of the neck and chin and usually lasts five to 10 days. Because of effective vaccines, most people think of the mumps as a childhood illness that had been eradicated in the US.

Thousands of Nepal protesters defy king, curfew

KATHMANDU—THOUSANDS OF prodemocracy protesters were converging Thursday on the Nepalese capital in defiance of shoot-on-sight curfew orders, AFP reporters said.

Waving party flags and chanting "Down with (King) Gyanendra, long live democracy," large crowds rallied at Gongabu on the northern rim of Kathmandu.

Demonstrators in their thousands were both inside and outside the curfew zone delineated by the city's ring road.

Women and children were among the peaceful protesters marshaled by party activists.

Security forces kept a close watch but did not intervene other than occasionally to chase away foreign reporters and photographers.

"We are ready to sacrifice our lives for democracy," said Sanyam Poudel.

"We are not scared of them," said the 22-year-old studying for a masters in English. "We gave many chances to the royal family, but the king has misunderstood us."

From the west side, thousands more prodemocracy activists also shouting anti-king slogans were marching towards Kalanki, a main entry point to the capital, witnesses said.

"People from Kirtipur town and other villages are converging on Kalanki," said Rajen-



KING Gyanendra of Nepal

dra Manandhar, who was watching the crowds from a rooftop.

"I can see a sea of people covering the road over three kilometers distance," he said.

Manandhar added that a large number of soldiers and armed policemen were stationed at the Kalanki crossroads into the capital.

At Chabahil to the northeast, an AFP reporter estimated that some 10,000 people had gathered demanding the restoration of democracy.

Blowing whistles and chanting against the king, the demonstration was heading towards the curfew area, also under the eyes of armed policemen.

Shoot-on-sight orders have been issued inside Kathmandu where the curfew was strictly enforced by a large security presence.

Despite the clampdown political parties have insisted mass demonstrations would go ahead, kicking off a third week of mass protests against the king.

The curfew was declared after witnesses

said four protesters were shot dead and many more wounded during violent clashes Wednesday in eastern Nepal, the worst violence of the campaign to end Gyanendra's absolute rule.

The defense ministry issued a statement saying only two people died.

The curfew limit extends 200 m beyond the ring road around the capital.

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The WORLD

Italy court says Prodi won

ROME—ITALY'S HIGHEST COURT UPHELD ON WEDNESDAY THE narrow victory of Romano Prodi in last week's elections, apparently ending Silvio Berlusconi's tenure as prime minister after five years—except that the mercurial Berlusconi still would not concede defeat.

Instead, there were strong signs that he was possibly opening a new campaign: To be named the nation's president, or at least have a strong say in the choice.

As of late Wednesday, hours after the high court, the Court of Cassazione, released its final count of last week's bitterly contested vote, Berlusconi had made no public comment. But several allies suggested that the court's decision

was not adequate, and the nation's political tensions tightened by a few notches.

"We acknowledge the decision," Sandro Bondi, national coordinator for Berlusconi's Forza Italia Party, said in a statement. But, Bondi said, "the reservations we advanced continue to stand."

Earlier in the day, Bondi floated a proposal that some political experts believe is the real

force behind Berlusconi's reluctance to acknowledge the results. He suggested that Berlusconi be made the president of Italy—a position appointed by Parliament that would keep him in politics, give him great prestige and protect him from any attack by a new government on his vast holdings in media, publishing and sports.

Berlusconi's stance seemed in character for a risk taker who built Italy's largest fortune and who has often been accused of ignoring the rules along the way. But it is unclear whether his continuing resistance to judicially certified election results will be seen as an admirable fighting spirit or a dangerous toying with Italian democracy.



NYT PRODI

Editor
Luverne B. Gueco

Rove's role diminished in revamp

WASHINGTON—THE OVERHAUL OF THE White House staff intensified on Wednesday as Karl Rove, one of the president's most powerful and feared advisers, gave up day-to-day control over the administration's domestic policy to concentrate on the midterm elections and Scott McClellan, the White House press secretary, said he would step down.

The departure of McClellan gives President Bush a chance to put a new public face on the White House at a time when it is beset by problems. But Rove's changed status is the more telling sign of the extent of the shakeup directed by Bush and his new chief of staff, Joshua B. Bolten.



ROVE

Rove has been at Bush's side since Bush entered politics, and for years his influence has been unquestioned. The decision to take away his daily control over the White House's policy-making apparatus is the first time his role has been diminished, and is a stark reversal from the heady aftermath of Bush's 2004 reelection victory, when Rove's portfolio was expanded to give him formal control over policy.

Rove will retain his title as a deputy chief of staff, as well as his catch-all designation as Bush's senior adviser. Joel D. Kaplan, now the deputy White House budget director, will assume Rove's duties as the manager of policy development at the White House and will take the title deputy chief of staff for policy.

The change in Rove's responsibilities was at a minimum a signal that the White House is serious about reorganizing itself to get Bush's presidency back on track, and was widely interpreted in Washington as a step down in stature for Rove and an acknowledgement of policy failures in the last year. Rove had taken the lead on what was supposed to be the main domestic policy initiative of the second Bush term, the president's proposal to remake the Social Security system. The effort to sell the plan to a skeptical Congress and voters flopped.

NYT

UN: Refugee system eroded by intolerance

LONDON—INTOLERANCE, TERRORISM fears and tighter asylum controls were undermining the international system for dealing with refugees, the UN high commissioner for refugees said Wednesday.

At 9.2 million people, the number of refugees was at its lowest level for 25 years, but this was tempered by a swell in the number of internally displaced people—refugees within their home country—to 25 million.

There was widespread confusion over migrants and refugees and the world was falling short of meeting internally displaced people's needs, high commissioner Antonio Guterres said.

"One of the main problems we face in order to safeguard asylum seekers is a growing intolerance, happening everywhere," said the former Portuguese prime minister.

"We are witnessing the rebirth of irrationality," he said, citing xenophobia.

"This is creating a difficult environment in which the foreigner is sometimes hated and feared."

Guterres was launching the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) new assessment, "The State of the World's Refugees: Human Displacement in the New Millennium."

The book, which tackles how the changing dynamics of displacement over the past five years have affected the international asylum regime, said the refugee system had reached a critical juncture.

The drop in refugee numbers was mostly due to the end of several conflicts and a few large-scale repatriations, notably four million people returning to Afghanistan, and others to Angola and Sierra Leone.

AFP



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TNT guns for 3rd straight win vs SLR

TALK 'N TEXT IS REAPING THE FRUITS OF embracing the defense-oriented style of coach Derrick Pumaren.

No longer struggling, the Phone Pals shoot for a third straight win in the Gran Mata dor-PBA Philippine Cup today when they clash with struggling Sta. Lucia at the Araneta Coliseum.

After claiming the scraps of Red Bull and Air21, Pumaren is convinced that the Phone Pals are now getting into the groove with the foundations that he laid down prior to the tournament.

"They (Phone Pals) are getting there. They are now rotating well and they know the roles they have to play," said Pumaren, who took over from Joel Banal before the start of the tournament. "Now, it's just a matter of fine-tuning."

The Phone Pals go into the 4:40 p.m.

TEAM	W	L
San Miguel	6	2
Coca-Cola	6	3
Purefoods	6	3
Talk 'N Text	4	4
Ginebra	4	4
Alaska	4	5
Red Bull	3	6
Air21	3	7
Sta. Lucia	2	8

GAMES TODAY

(All times Philippine Time)

4:40 p.m. — Sta. Lucia vs Talk 'N Text

7:35 p.m. — Barangay Ginebra vs Red Bull

match running fourth with their 4-4 record along with the Barangay Ginebra Kings while the Realtors are mired at the cellar with only two wins to show in eight games.

The defending champion Kings collide with Red Bull in the other game scheduled at 7:35 p.m. with Ginebra hoping to recover from a 103-94 beating it took from San Miguel and the Bulls seeking to arrest a four-game skid.

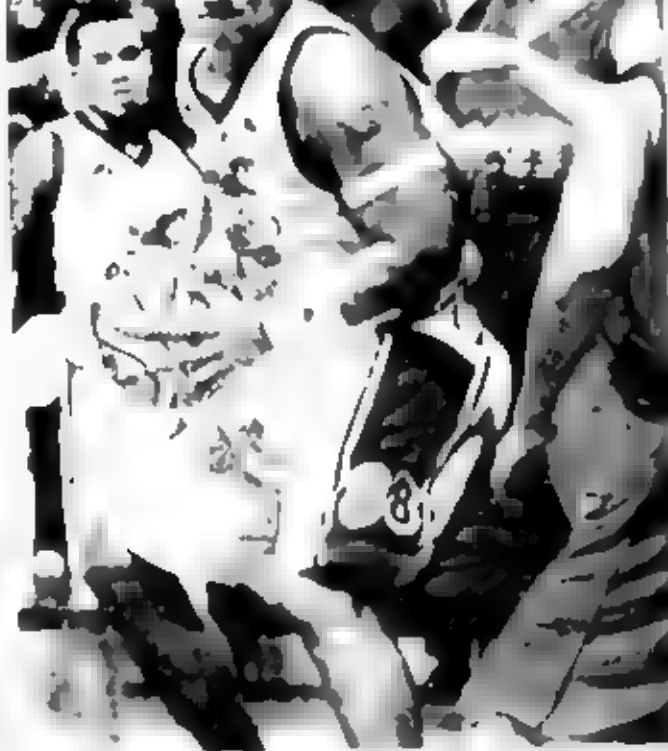
Not only are the Bulls losing games at an alarming rate, Yeng Guiao's charges dropped their fourth straight game after blowing a nine-point advantage down the stretch against Alaska last Easter Sunday.

While they are playing great defense, the Pals still have to maintain their consistent offense if they want to win more games.

"That is something we all have to see," said Pumaren moments after a 103-88 rout of the Air21 Express on Easter Sunday, their second straight after a conquest of Red Bull the week before.

In their last outing, the Realtors narrowly dropped a 104-108 overtime decision to the Coca-Cola Tigers with Dennis Espino and Kenneth Duremdes on the injury list. The two superstars will return to action today.

June Navarro



ASL Bulave will be a force to reckon with for Talk 'N Text tonight.

Enduro SML series starts in Cebu City

GEAR UP AND GET READY AS ENDURO SAN MIG Light Adventures Series 2006 goes nationwide.

The Enduro SML Series, the adventure race, which for years has tested the racers' endurance and stamina, is here anew with bigger challenges.

This year, the Enduro SML Adventure Race is set to conquer not only Luzon but also Visayas and Mindanao.

The first leg of the race unfolds on May 27 in Cebu City, while the second leg will be in Davao City on June 10. The grand finale will be in Metro Manila on July 7 to 8.

With more than P100,000 at stake, the race brings together hardcore athletes, yuppies, students, weekend warriors and even the media and celebrities to vie for the Enduro SML Adventure title.

But unlike in the previous Enduro races, the first two legs of the race will only have the novice category, a 4-6 hour quest.

The Manila leg, on the other hand, has the novice and elite categories.

The elite category, which is suited for hardcore and professional adventure racers, is a day-long race that dishes out more arduous and grueling tasks and challenges that will test the skills, stamina and determination of the participants.

More than 100 teams are expected to compete in this annual race being held for the third time. This event is presented by San Mig Light, the right alcohol less filling beer.

This time, racing enthusiasts from Mindanao will have a chance to strut their stuff in the event that defies all limits.

The Enduro SML Series delivers intense action as each racer comes face-to-face with an expected trail and hardships along the race.

Call the Enduro hotline at (632)414-1489 or log on to www.sanmiglight.com.ph for details.

Mindanao off-road invitational gets going today

THE SECOND LEG OF THE MINDANAO Off-road Series comes afoot today up to Sunday in Mangima, Manolo Portich, Bukidnon, with the "Maximum Underdrive 5 Off-road Invitational."

The event will pit the country's

best 4x4 specialists against a computerized clock on a racetrack that is 100 percent made by nature. Deep water crossings, rocks and boulders, mud and steep slopes are just some of the challenges that await the competitors.

The event is organized by the 4x4 Fun Club and supported by Motormal, Davao Corp., Sarman CPRI Supercool, 4AC Watchers Marketing, Hankook Performance Tires, Parasat Cable TV, Footprints Award Centrum, Roadstone Tires, Cordel Auto Parts, Petron Rev-X,

Sandy 101 SFM and Misamis Oriental Gov. Oscar Moreno.

Although some of the entries are veterans of last year's event, organizers say that this year's course will provide bigger challenges and only the best will come out on top.

Hiso-Token Cycling kicks off tomorrow

THE 1ST HISO-TOKEN CYCLING Cup kicks off at the Golden Valley Commercial Center in Marikina City at 7 a.m. tomorrow.

The country's top cyclists, Victor Espiritu and Lloyd Reynante, have confirmed their participation in this criterion race.

Event organizer Rolly P. Hiso of RP Hiso Sports Management said this one-day cycling spectacle is open to all cyclists, including non-Marikina residents.

The event is managed by Marikina Cycling Club headed by its chair and president Wilbur

Dee, vice president Berting Rosales and officers Zaldy Cornejo, Larry Funesas, Pol Cortiguerra, Boyet Torres, Adamaon Alarcon, Bert Roxas, Leo Rejano, Rue Tan, Reynaldo de Dios, Enrique Cruz and Barangay Concepcion chair Rudy Francisco.

The race is co-sponsored by GVCC owner Vicente Santos.

"It's nice to see young riders to develop their skills in competitions like this," said the Chicago-based Hiso, team manager of the Philippine Cycling Team during 1991 Manila Southeast Asian Games.

SPORTSWATCH

San Miguel backs drag racing

SAN MIGUEL CORP. GAVE ITS SUPPORT TO THE BATANGAS RACING CIRCUIT for the launching of a new drag racing event for bikes dubbed as the Ginebra San Miguel Underbone Invitational Drag Race tomorrow at the BRC Drag Strip in Rosario, Batangas. Cash prizes and trophies await the winners of this event sponsored by Ginebra San Miguel and supported by Philipines Shell, Danisco, Casino Filipino, Aras, Shoei and KPM Helmets. Contact Kilton Motors Office c/o BRC operations manager Rodolfo Rivera or Nelson Gayol at (632) 817-2241, 729-5365 or fax 815-1241 for details.

YMCA Makati sports clinics up

YMCA MAKATI IS STILL ACCEPTING ENROLLEES FOR ITS SPORTS clinics at No. 7 Sacred Heart St., San Antonio Village, Makati City. Swimming schedule: batch 2 (April 17-28), batch 3 (May 1-12) and batch 4 (May 15-26); basketball: batch 2 (April 17-28), batch 3 (May 1-12), batch 4 (May 15-26); tennis: batch 2 (April 17-28), batch 3 (May 1-12), batch 4 (May 15-26); muay thai/kickboxing (April 17-May 26). For inquiries, call 899-6380 to 62, 899-6101 to 63, 899-8255.

Summer Salpukan offers P4.4M prize

WITH MORE THAN 300 CONFIRMED ENTRIES, THE SUMMER SALPUKAN 6-Cock Derby backed by B-Mag Derby Ace starts on Wednesday at the Makati Coliseum. The seven-day W6 (April 26, 28, May 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13) offers a prize of P4.4 million, broken down as follows: P3 million cash, two Toyota cars and two motorcycles. Entry fee is P11,000 according to promoters Lila Orkiza, Rudy Salud and William Co. of WTI Sports and Amusement Corp. Call 896-3545 and 896-8475 (Joan or Stephanie).

70 fights in Pasay derby today

AFICIONADOS CAN EXPECT MORE THAN 70 QUALITY FIGHTS TODAY AS big-time cockers collide in Pasay City Cockpit's BJ Engweniro 4-cock derby to be sponsored by Sagupaan Complex 3000. Boy Javier, a leading Metro Manila cocker affiliated with the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA), and Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP), will host the derby. For an entry fee of P10,000, a cash prize of P300,000 awaits the winners. For details, call 843-1860, 843-1746 and 818-8750.

Big-time 5-cocker set at SJC

PROMINENT COCKERS AND BREEDERS OF METRO MANILA AND NEARBY provinces have signed up for the 5-cock derby at San Juan Coliseum on April 26. It is supported by Sagupaan Complex 3000. "We are expecting more than 100 fights on Wednesday, that's why the derby will start at 2 p.m.," said SJC pit manager Pete Rivera. Derby host J. Paneda said guaranteed prize is P700,000. Contact 725-6563, 725-5366 and 0917-8041591 (Arat).

BY TOP CHOICE	BY TOP CHOICE
<p>Run 1—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p> <p>Run 2—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p> <p>Run 3—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p> <p>Run 4—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p> <p>Run 5—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p>	<p>Run 6—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p> <p>Run 7—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p> <p>Run 8—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p> <p>Run 9—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p> <p>Run 10—(1) Thoresnap (2) Bata (3) Portogay (4) P-10</p>

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SPORTS

Wizards book playoff showdown with Cavs

LOS ANGELES—THE LAST PIECES OF THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL Association playoff puzzle finally fell into place Wednesday as the regular season concluded.

The Eastern Conference's fifth through eighth seeds were set to be decided heading into the final day of action, and the Washington Wizards seized the No. 5 spot with a 96-80 victory over the top-seeded Detroit Pistons.

Caron Butler had 33 points and 12 rebounds as the Wizards booked a first-round clash with Cleveland and LeBron James.

The Cavaliers, who rested James and Larry Hughes, escaped with a 100-99 victory over Atlanta.

They took their record to 50-32, the fourth time in club history the Cavaliers have posted 50 wins and the first since the 1992-93 campaign.

Butler didn't seem to mind that the Pistons treated the game like an exhibition.

Detroit, who finished the season with a 64-18 record and set a franchise record for wins in the regular

season, will face Milwaukee in the first round.

The Indiana Pacers clinched the sixth seed in the East with an 89-83 victory over Orlando.

Jermaine O'Neal had 24 points, Stephen Jackson added 22 points and Peja Stojakovic 17 for the Pacers, who won five of their final six games and will face New Jersey in the playoffs.

The Chicago Bulls earned the seventh seed with Ben Gordon scoring 24 points in the Bulls' 127-106 rout of Toronto.

Luol Deng added 21 points, Kirk Hinrich 17 and 10 assists and Andres Nocioni 14 and 11 rebounds for Chicago, who closed the regular season by winning six straight and 10 of their last 11 games.

They'll face the second-seeded Miami Heat in the first round.

In the West, San Antonio's decision to rest Tim Duncan and Tony Parker

didn't stop the top-seeded Spurs from closing the season with an 89-87 victory over Houston.

The Spurs finished the season with a 63-19 record and will face Sacramento in the first round.

The Los Angeles Lakers secured the seventh seed ahead of Sacramento with a convincing 115-95 victory over New Orleans.

Kobe Bryant scored 27 of his 35 points in the first half as the Lakers booked a first-round clash with the Phoenix Suns.

Bryant, making one more claim to Most Valuable Player honors, compiled his latest dominant performance, making 13-of-26 shots en route to finishing the campaign with a league-best 35.4 shooting average.

Complete Results: Cleveland 100, Atlanta 98; Indiana 89, Orlando 83; Boston 84, Miami 78; NY Knicks 90, New Jersey 83; Charlotte 94, Philadelphia 85; Washington 86, Detroit 82; Memphis 102, Minnesota 82 (OT); San Antonio 89, Houston 87; LA Clippers 85, Dallas 71.



ALLEN

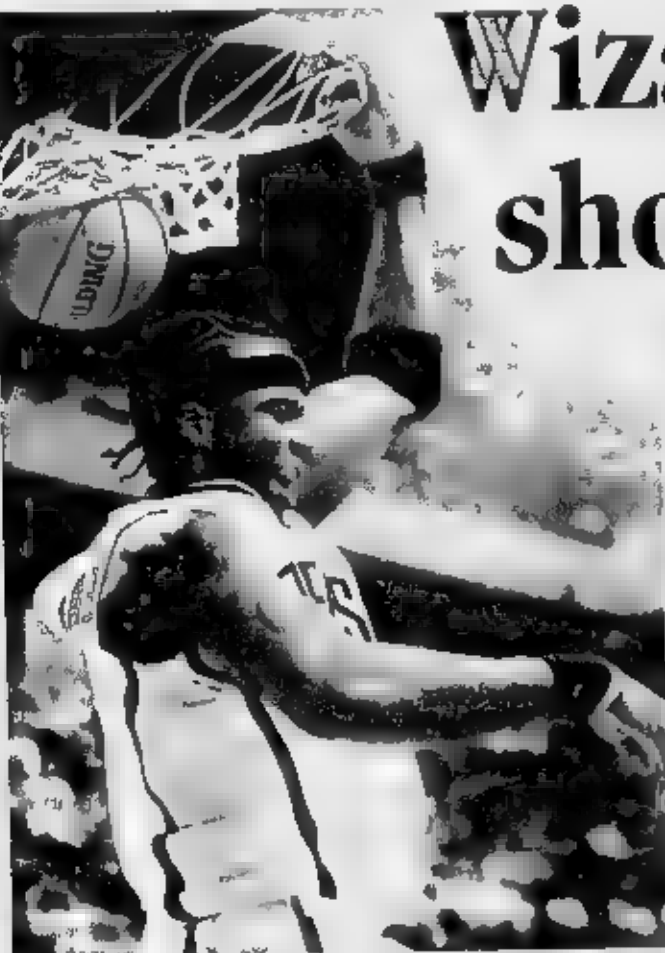
Allen rips 3-pt mark

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON—RAY Allen broke the National Basketball Association's single-season record for 3-pointers as he led the SuperSonics to a 109-98 win over Denver on the final day of the regular season on Wednesday.

Allen scored 27 points and made 7-of-13 from the arc to finish the 2005-06 campaign with 269 3-pointers, breaking the mark set by Dennis Scott in 1995-1996.

He raised his career total to 1,755, second on the all-time list behind Reggie Miller.

Allen sank five 3-pointers in the first quarter and scored 20 points in the opening half.



PACERS' Jermaine O'Neal dunks against the Magic.

Mowelfund Celebrity Inv'l golf set June 23

TO BENEFIT MARGINALIZED workers in the film industry, golfing celebrities see action on June 23 to raise funds for the Mowelfund Welfare Foundation (Mowelfund) at the short Club Intramuros layout in Manila.

This marks the first time that Mowelfund put up by former President and actor Joseph Estrada in 1974, will be organizing a golf tournament, dubbed the "Celebrity Golf Cup Invitational."

The most prominent names in entertainment, politics, sports and media have been invited as the Mowelfund aims to raise a significant amount of money to help in sustaining the privileges and benefits of its more than 4,500 members.

Former Senator Tito Sotto and actress Boots Anson-Roa head the organizing committee of the event which was launched yesterday.

The tournament, which will

use the modified stableford format of scoring, is expected to be graced by such screen and television luminaries like Vic Sotto, Richard Gomez, Aga Muhlach and Ogie Alcasid, among others.

Sotto and Roa have invited former president Fidel V. Ramos to be the ceremonial tee shot, with Philippine Tourism Authority general manager Robert Dean Barbers also invited to play.

The Mowelfund has been working on a tight budget since 2002, when its share of amusement tax charges in the Metro Manila Film Festival was cut to 30 percent from 50.

Not only do the members enjoy medical and hospitalization benefits amounting to P77,000 each per year, Mowelfund also provides aid for the education needs of the children of its members.

For inquiries, call 727-1915, 727-1961 and 936-3879 c/o Tere, Jacqui and May.

MONTE CARLO—WORLD NUMBER one Roger Federer and defending champion Rafael Nadal edged closer to another title showdown when they stormed into the Monte Carlo Masters third round on Wednesday.

Top seed Federer led a sweep of the top four seeds into the next phase with a 46-minute, 6-0, 6-1 demolition job of hapless Spaniard Alberto Marin.

Federer, building up to another assault on the French Open title—the only Grand Slam crown to have eluded him—allowed Marin just 18 points in their one-sided encounter.

The Swiss star now faces world number 352 Benjamin Balleret of Monaco on Thursday.

The unknown 23-year-old advanced as French 13th seed Sebastien Grosjean was forced to quit with a back injury trailing 4-6, 7-5, 3-2.

Federer marvelled at how he was able to turn his clay fortunes after struggling in the first round here.

"This was really unexpected," said



FEDERER

Federer whose season now stands at 30-1.

"I didn't play well in the first round. To play so different two days later, it's quite, incredible," Federer said to wax for several hours to take the court as such seed Guillermo Coria battled back from the brink against Frenchman Paul-Henri Mathieu 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 victory.

"In the locker room I was getting impatient to get on the court, I had to



NADAL

warm up several times. I was really getting sort of ready to play and it never really happened.

"Once I got out there, I played very free, I played very good. I'm very happy the way I played, and everything worked out how I wanted."

"I couldn't have played any better," Spain's second-seed Rafael Nadal beat approaching showers as he put out Monaco's other entry, Jean-Rene Liand, 6-4, 6-1.

The reigning Roland Garros champion claimed his 38th consecutive victory on clay and now stands just one match behind Thomas Muster and Ili Nastase, who are tied for fourth on the all-time list.

Nadal, last beaten on the dirt in April, 2005, improved to 10-1 in the principality.

Third seed David Nalbandian complained about a 10:00 start, but earned down with a 7-5, 7-5 win over Italian Andreas Seppi.

Croatian Ivan Ljubicic, the fourth seed, beat Frenchman Florent Serra, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 while Spaniards David Ferrer, German Nicolas Pietrangeli, and former champion Juan Carlos Ferrero all went through.

But Sicilian Alessio Di Mauro knocked out ninth seed Radek Stepanek 6-2, 2-6, 7-6 (7/4).

Mathieu had all the chances against Coria, but couldn't convert a 6-1, 4-0 lead into a win. He saved six match points—but stumbled on four of his own before going down.

"It was a good fight but I'm furious at myself," said Mathieu.

Tiger tries his driving mettle in stock racing

AUCKLAND—THE FANS OF golf superstar Tiger Woods know he can drive long but now they are going to find out if he can also drive fast.

The world No. 1 will try stock car racing in the New Zealand town of Huntly, south of Auckland, on Monday at the behest of his caddy and part-time car racer Steve Williams.

"I've done other things—I've thrown a baseball a few times and thrown a couple of coins here and there," Woods told journalists in Auckland Thursday.



WOODS

"This is a bit more physical." Stock car racing in New Zealand involves short races between old cars, with a lot of shoving and crashing between contestants, but Woods was not put off.

"If they knock me off, I can knock them off," he said. "The whole idea is to have fun."

Asked about insurance, he said: "That's taken care of." Williams said Woods had watched stock car racing when he was in the country in 2002 to play in the New Zealand Open.

Wood's lack of time behind the wheel of a stock car should be no problem, Williams said. "He's driven on the freeway in LA a lot, so he's had plenty of experience."

All Black rugby captain Tana Umaga is also entered.

AFP

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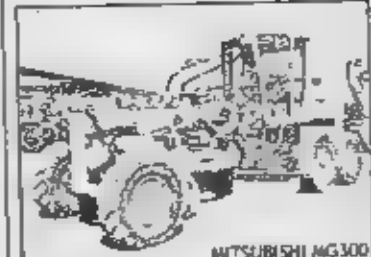
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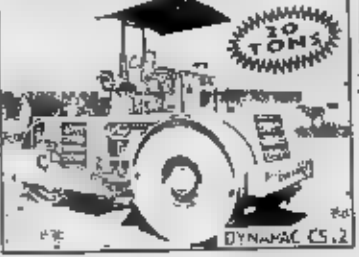
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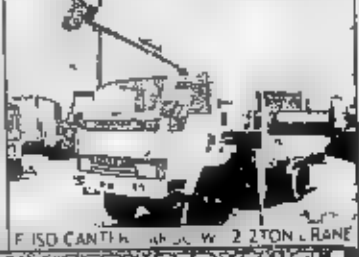
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4th Camp John Hay member-guest on

BAGUIO—THE FOURTH Camp John Hay Invitational member-guest tournament will be held today and tomorrow at the Camp John Hay Golf Club course with 58 teams participating. Tie-off is shotgun style at 8 a.m.

The field will be vying for the overall team low net, the overall individual gross and the top awards in Class A, Class B, Class C and Class D. Sponsors are Rudy Project, Club Leisure Management, Camp John Hay Golf Club,

Camp John Hay Development Corp., Camp John Hay Manor, Le Chef, Golfcourse, Metro Rail Transit Corp., Federal Management and Maintenance, Inc., Wilson Sport, DHN Construction, TSAJ Sales Corp and Kork, Inc.

Among the noted teams are Shean Berd-fingy Tasson, Jason Lim-Montito Garcia, Nelson Esao-Rick Madayag, Peng de Tagle-Ellen Sammartino, Choi Cojuangco-Eli Alejandro, Hiet Bautista-Peter Chen and Monet Garcia-Dodie Puno.

Subic hosts jet ski tilt tomorrow

THE COUNTRY'S TOP JETSKI riders will battle it out in the kickoff of the 2006 Petron National Jet Ski Series at 9 a.m. tomorrow at the Watersport Beach of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

World Jet Ski runner-up Paul del Rosario and 1998 champion John Dee lead the elite field. JSAP acting president Dong Arcilla and Race Director Sonny Yalung urged all riders to bring their standard protective gears.

Call 413-3109 or log on at www.networkjetsports.com for details.

SM Storyland badminton reset

RESPONDING TO POPULAR demand, organizers of the SM Storyland Junior Badminton Camp decided to reset its opening from this weekend to April

29-30. The first clinic will now be held at SM Southmall on April 29-30 followed by the second clinic at SM Fairview on May 6-

7. The competitions will be held on May 13-14 at SM Southmall and May 21 at SM Fairview.

For inquiries, call 8000614 or 9380506.

De La Salle expecting quick UAAP decision

"We hope that it will be finished soon," Bro. Bobby Casingal, LA Sallie's sports development head, said yesterday. "Once the UAAP

"The team is in limbo," noted Casingal. "We cannot assure the

Bentzen and Gatchalian were part of the Archers' 2004 championship team. Bentzen still played in L. Salie's team that placed runner-up

The UAAP investigating committee is headed by Fr. Ernito d. Sagon of University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Josie de Leon of Far Eastern University, Arlen Royo of National University and legal counsel lawyer Rene Villalva. They will be joined by a representative from the Philippine Commission on Human Rights to complete the five-man panel.



Miñoza two shots behind with a 69

Miñoza, the No. 1 Filipino shotmaker, had nines of 36-33 in his strongest opening round the

The \$1.8 million (euro1.7 million) Asian Open, with a top prize of \$300,000, is co-sanctioned by the PGA European Tour and the Asian Tour.

Ateneo tests UE spikers

The Lady Eagles battle newcomers University of the East in the second of two games scheduled to open the

The Lady Falcons and the Lady Dolphins are also seeing action in the league for the first time. Like University of the East, adding flavor to the tournament which will miss traditional powerhouse San to Tomas, the first champion which begged off after losing its core to graduation.

Hard work pays off for Ali Atienza

As an international official, traveled abroad to meet with other sports leaders who gave him valuable lessons in sports development and management practice.

in this ongoing Philippine Cup losing four straight games (the last to the Alaska Aces) and dropping to a lowly 3-6 card. With the talents Guiao has inherited and drafted, how come the team is not making an impact? R. Ball plays crowd favorite Ginnet tonight at the Big Dome.

"We are always searching. But we get that, and give our clients better protection and comfort for their feet," explained Randy Tim, IIP's general manager.

In most recent boot-throughs in significantly different and unique in the winter climates, the boots have been treated and do not melt the treated surface and does not affect the normal shoe bottoms, and cause rashes or skin irritations.

The Strength and Adherence Test Results conducted by AHSIS Laboratory International confirmed the very high level of adherence, after 20 hours of use, holding after 24 hours." Burlington's IIP Fresh Shoes passed our test with flying colors," declares Jim Krueger, AHSIS VP for Marketing.

detecting the presence of Biotin. Fresh in one's socks is so easy you can slip them into a diluted biotin solution (1:100) and then check for a reaction. If it glows, it's biotin. It produces a blue stain that will not be eliminated by the water.

Burlington's Fresh Shoes do not mean any labels which is a valuable leading component shows that the company is the recipient of the highest quality award in the footwear industry.

The Burlington Footwear recently won the United States 10th Annual Footwear Excellence Award for its commitment to innovation. The judges understood the company's commitment to innovation, their for ultimate customer satisfaction.

tion in closing the anti-sectarian society. It is said that a pair of Taoist socks works better even after 50 washings. In one year of regular weekly washing, Changsheng brand socks by Netai, China and Black Socks accepted the laundry from the second-year my body.

The brand was likewise a witness of the Top Quality Socks recognition during the 20th brand ceremony. A tribute to the Great Field of the Fuzhou Division of the Chinese People's Republic.

The Chinese have the reputation of the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. And if one is wearing Changsheng's Taoist socks or casual socks, these socks will be only small steps but still effective.

ENTERTAINMENT

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What 'Idol' clone?

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE REALITY TALENT SEARCH "PINOY POP Superstar" on GMA 7 is an "original concept of the network," not a clone of the phenomenally popular Fox talent show "American Idol," according to "Pinoy" program manager Hazel Abonita.

"The format of 'PPS' is very different," Abonita told INQUIRER Entertainment on Wednesday. "[In fact] if the forthcoming 'Philippine Idol' will only be the local 'AI,' it shouldn't be a rival of 'PPS.'"

ABC 5 recently acquired the "AI" franchise from FremantleMedia. "Philippine Idol" premieres in July. "AI" itself is a franchise of "Pop Idol," which originated in the United Kingdom in 2001.

Abonita noted that a "PPS" contender has to win in a qualifying round, then slug it out with different challengers for at least four weeks.

Constructive

Also, she said, compared to the three "AI" judges—Simon Cowell, Paula Abdul and Randy Jackson—"PPS" jurors Jaya, Danny Tan and Floy Quintos give "only constructive" criticisms.

Abonita added that all seven finalists who will face off on May 6 in a grand showdown at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City—are required to perform in nationwide road shows in key cities like Cebu, Baguio, Iloilo and Davao. (Ten percent of the final ratings will be based on these performances.)

Finaleist Acelle Santos, a psychology student and champion for eight weeks, said she had to quit school on account of her tight "PPS" schedule.

"Lack of rest affects our performance," Davaoño Denver Regencia, another champ for eight weeks, told a



DENVER Regencia



ELISE Estrada



ROSEMARIE Tan



ACELLE Santos



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DAVID: Connecting people

faces while I performed was a big factor in my triumph." At no point did he feel he was in a foreign land, competing against 106 singers from 27 countries, he said.

Coming home to the big welcome on Monday, it was obvious the 52-year-old vocalist had not shaken off the joy from that euphoric bonding with compatriots. It was clear, David said, that he was in the tilt less for himself than for his country.

Single obstacle

The only obstacle, if it could be called that, he said, was the cold weather.

Both the judges and his co-finalists had given the Filipino contender high ratings.

"One told me it was my focus on the lyrics that gave me the edge," David recounted. "Another said it was my confidence."

He credited his long years of experience as a performer in the Philippines. "Musically and technically," he said, "all the finalists were very good."

Also on Monday, President Macapagal-Arroyo officially congratulated David for the "well-deserved" triumph.

In a letter sent through the Center for Kapampangan Studies of the Holy Angel University, the

MON/A2-4

Use your HSBC credit card for a chance to go to Paris and London and re-live scenes from the movie *The Da Vinci Code*.



In theaters May 2006
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This summer, your HSBC credit card gives you a chance to win a FREE trip for two to Paris and London plus P100,000 spending money. Your trip will include a visit to the Louvre, where *The Da Vinci Code* begins, and Westminster Abbey, where the mystery unravels.

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Eva Longoria 'dressed to the 9' by Monique Lhuillier

LOS ANGELES—EVA Longoria showed up at a recent press conference literally dressed to the 9 by Filipino designer Monique Lhuillier.

Eva wore Monique's sparkling diamond-studded pendant in the shape of a 9—the jersey number of her boyfriend, San Antonio Spurs standout Tony Parker.

That much the "Desperate Housewives" star is devoted to her French-speaking basketball player (born in Belgium, raised in France). "You know what? I am that girl," she admitted. "I am really loyal. I'm really supportive and this was actually my Christmas gift [from Tony]. It was designed by Monique Lhuillier [The pendant] just looks like a 9 but it wasn't meant to [laughs]."

The actress, who is branching into movies via the political thriller "The Sentinel" with Michael Douglas and Kiefer Sutherland, even has jeans embellished with nine in

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

rhinestones. "People send me things," the petite (only 5' 2" tall) former Miss Corpus Christi (Texas) USA said, looking amused. "It's not like I want number 9 on everything. It just happens to be ... like when you say, 'I love frogs' and all of a sudden, you have a desk full of frog paperweights, frog pencils and so on. It kind of spun out of control [laughs]."

'World's hottest'

After the press con, Eva told me, "I go to Monique a lot." Apparently, she meant not just for clothes but for jewelry as well. Eva shared her excitement about the designer's baby boy, born last January.

In the interview, TV's Gabrielle

was asked to confirm rumors that Tony, who has a French hip-hop album, has bought her an engagement ring as well. "No," she laughed, holding up ring-free fingers before the assembled writers. "No plans." Maxim magazine's "#1 Hottest Woman in the World" in 2005 splits her time between San Antonio, Texas, where she watches Tony's home court games whenever she can, and Los Angeles.

Eva's first marriage in 2002, to soap opera actor Tyler Christopher, ended quickly. Of that union, she revealed, "We eloped and went to Vegas. We really didn't think it through. What it taught me was that marriage is a very serious sacrament that I wasn't ready for at that time. Hopefully, the next time it happens, it's going to be well thought out."

The 31-year-old Texas native seems to be carefully plotting her show biz career moves. "The Sentinel" will be followed by another movie outing, "Harsh Times," an indie drama with Christian Bale and Freddie Rodriguez. In the former, produced by Michael Douglas, she got the part of a secret service agent, thanks in large part to "Desperate Housewives."

"Michael, luckily, is a huge fan of the show," the actress explained. "He and Catherine watch it all the time so he knew my work. Michael knew from the beginning that I was a tomboy, that I'm a



"I WAS an ugly duckling," says Maxim magazine's "Hottest Woman."

great shot. He knew I grew up in Texas so he really believed that this character would be a perfect fit."

How great a shooter is she? "I

shoot better than 90 percent of the police officers in the country," she told me, laughing.

Guys, she is not joking. It turns out that diminutive Eva has been

shooting guns since she was, believe it or not, 5 years old. Was she scared being taught by her dad to hunt and shoot at such an early age, I asked the plucky Texan. "It came naturally," she answered. "I was raised on a ranch. We would go target hunting and shooting all the time with my dad. We would shoot coffee cans, beer bottles and fence posts." But she made sure to add, "I'm obviously very educated on how to handle a gun. My dad did a great job of raising us about gun safety and all of that."

Moral boundaries

On which character she identifies with most, the "sexpot" (her word) Gabrielle or pistol-packing novice agent Jill in "The Sentinel," Eva replied, "Oh, God, they're completely different. Playing Jill is probably closer to me and who I am. She has moral boundaries. She's good with a gun. I'm good with a gun [laughs]. She's very adamant about not using her looks to move forward, which is the exact opposite of Gabrielle [laughs]. I picked 'The Sentinel' because I wanted to venture out of 'Desperate Housewives' before people could only see me as Gabrielle."

"Desperate Housewives" fans, worry not. Eva is not leaving Wisteria Lane. At least not for now. She divulged that not one, but five babies play her adopted infant daughter Lily on the hit series. Since baby actors can't be overworked (this is Hollywood, after all, baby), a set of twins and a set of triplets play the daughter of TV's sexiest mom.

Eva herself likes to point out that she was not the cutest baby in the world. "I was born the 'ugly duckling,'" she declared, a refrain that she brings up in interviews because she knows it makes for good copy. "All my sisters are very light-skinned. They have hazel eyes and blonde hair. I was the first born dark so I was called *la prieta fea* growing up, which means 'the ugly dark one.' My parents would say that to me."

Scarred

"It taught me really early to develop a personality, a sense of humor, a lot of other skills and to focus on my education. I didn't blossom until college, until I started doing the pageants. I think it was a by-product of being called ugly my whole life. I keep telling myself that I was ugly but she didn't [laughs]."

But it was from the heart that she spoke of why she has been an active volunteer at the Special Olympics. Eva disclosed, "My oldest sister is mentally challenged. I grew up with her being the light and center of our family. She was a great teacher because of my sister. So we went to the Special Olympics since I can remember."

"We were born into my sister's world so I know nothing else. It wasn't as if all of a sudden, my life changed and I didn't get as much attention because this child needed more attention. It was always that way with us. The only world I know is living with her, catering to her and supporting any causes that help the development of mentally challenged individuals. She's an amazing human being. I just couldn't see my life any other way."

(E-mail the columnist at rvnepales5585@yahoo.com.)

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1

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2

SUBMERGED

PG-13

3

ICE AGE 2

GP

4

THE MONUMENTS MEN

GP

5

THE MONUMENTS MEN

GP

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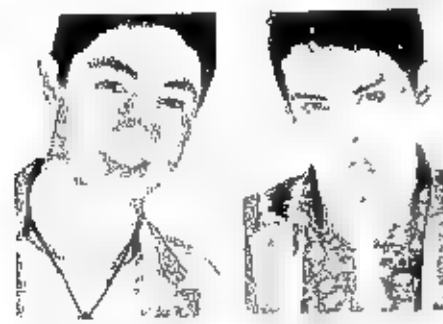
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A2



HARRY Santos

IRRA Cenina

What 'Idol' clone?

From page A2-1

group of writers on Monday. "After this press con, we are proceeding to Cagayan."

The other finalists are Harry Santos, champion for seven weeks; Ira Cenina, four weeks; Gerald Santos, four weeks; Elise Estrada, winner in Canada and Rosemarie Tan, winner in the United States.

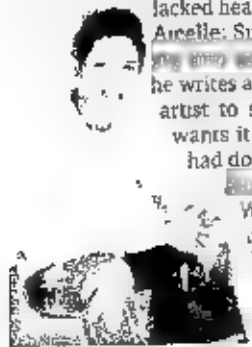
Does your choice of songs for the competition affect your chances of winning? Alcelle: Definitely. I'm into soul and R&B. I also like jazz, but I need to reach out to the masa, who would vote for me the most. Denver: I think winning is based on the total package, not just the kind of songs we choose.

What has been the most unfair comment you got from the judges?

Denver: Sir Danny said my performance lacked heart.

Alcelle: Sir Danny told me on the first audition, when he writes a song, he wants the artist to sing it the way he wants it sung. He wished I had done that when I sang

"Woman." He didn't like my version. I begged for him to make me sing again. I did "In- passed!"



GERALD Santos

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2 PAMAHIN 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	7 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
3 SUBMERGED 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50	8 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
4 THE COOLER 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	9 ICE AGE 2 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
5 D' LUCKY ONES 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	10 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA

1 ICE AGE 2 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50	5 SUBMERGED 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	6 EIGHT BELOW 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 AMERICAN SOLDIER 12:35 3:00 5:15 7:35 10:00	7 D' LUCKY ONES 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 PAMAHIN 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	

METRO EAST

1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00	5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 ICE AGE 2 12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00	6 MOMENTS OF LOVE 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
3 D' LUCKY ONES 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05	7 EIGHT BELOW 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00	8 PAMAHIN 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

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1 D' LUCKY ONES	4 PAMAHIN
2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE	5 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 EIGHT BELOW	

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5 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE	

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ENTERTAINMENT

Celebrity

WE CAUGHT A PREVIOUS SEASON of the celebrity dance contest "Shall We Dance" on ABC-5 and found it occasionally compelling but more generally weak, because some of the celebrity contestants in question didn't work hard enough on their ballroom dancing challenges.

Happily, that can't be said of the show's latest edition, which had its monthly finals two Sundays ago. The celebrities vying for the top choreographer title's top monthly prize were so good that, instead of two finalists, the show's jurors chose three—Mystica, William Martinez and Wowee de Guzman, with their respective dance partners—choreographers.

That was a tribute to the three team's talents, hard work and commitment, which placed them way above some other celebrity contestants who were unwilling to get out of their stellar comfort zones.

The three celebrity finalists weren't limited by such smugness or laziness. They threw themselves into the challenge at hand, momentarily forgetting that they were stars who no longer had to bust a gut to impress viewers.

As a result, they came up with dance routines that showcased them in a new light. In the process, they impressed the jurors, viewers—and even themselves! Best of all, they discovered that they had much more to develop in themselves, and thus got a new lease on their performing lives.

The first celebrity to strut his stuff in the finals was Wowee de Guzman. He and his partner danced so compellingly that they set a high standard for the other finalists to match.

Mystica and her partner opted for a slower number, but banked on a seductive partnership that enabled them to also raise viewers' temperature in their own way.

For his part, William Martinez complemented his dance number's choreographic flourishes with some tongue-in-cheek touches that were uniquely his.

Wowee put up a good fight, but when the smoke finally cleared up, it was Mystica who romped off with the monthly finals top prize.

In our book, however, all three finalist celebrities and their partners were winners because they went far beyond their comfort zones and pushed themselves to the limit in coming up with their truly outstanding dance numbers. May we all learn an inspiring lesson from their gutsy example.

'Ice Age 2'

IN ONLY 12 days, "Ice Age 2: The Meltdown" grossed P80 million nationwide, making it the biggest March release ever in the Philippines, and the biggest-grossing animated feature to be shown here. The film is a 20th Century Fox production released here by Warner Bros.

'Tita'

NYOY Volante jams with the country's top guitarists in "Tita," a rare musical event at the Festiro in Greenhills, on May 10, 11, 12 and 13. Joining Nyoy are Paolo Santos Pido, Noel Cabangon, Maayan Aguilar, Gary Granada and Ra-

Mon: Pinoys in London ...

From page A2-1

President cited David's "tireless advocacy to promote Filipino culture." Ms Arroyo urged him to "continue to win the hearts of music enthusiasts here and abroad as you represent the best that the Philippines can be," and "continue to do for the Philippines proud as you share your gift of song with the rest of the world."

As a tribute to David and all Kapampangan achievers in the arts, the provincial government declared March 22 "Kapampangan Artists' Day."

Truly Kapampangan

David, a native of San Juan town, has recorded Kapampangan songs. The Pampanga artists "Humno ning Kapampangan" and the pop duo "Kapampangan" are two of his signature songs.

To David, the London sound dated a belief he had long held about music. "In a jazz bar in London, some British students asked me to sing a song in my native tongue. I did 'Abe Ma Ka (I Am with You)'. The language was of course strange to them, yet we managed to transcend that barrier. Music really connects people."

A2-4

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SM MEGACINEMA AMERICAN SOLDIERS PAMAHIN ICE AGE 2 RESERVED SUBMERGED EIGHT BELOW JUST FRIENDS BANDIDAS MOMENTS OF LOVE D LUCKY ONES FINAL DESTINATION 3 TRISTAN & ISOLDE	SEA CITY NORTH EDSA TRISTAN & ISOLDE MOMENTS OF LOVE PAMAHIN ICE AGE 2 AMERICAN SOLDIERS EIGHT BELOW SUBMERGED D LUCKY ONES TRISTAN & ISOLDE	SEA CITY SOUTH EDSA ICE AGE 2 SUBMERGED EIGHT BELOW MOMENTS OF LOVE D LUCKY ONES VENOM TRISTAN & ISOLDE BANDIDAS MOMENTS OF LOVE AMERICAN SOLDIERS
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PACIFIC MALL CINEMAGIC ICE AGE 2 EIGHT BELOW TRISTAN & ISOLDE PAMAHIN SUBMERGED MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE 2 AMERICAN SOLDIERS VENOM TRISTAN & ISOLDE	Blue Wave EIGHT BELOW TRISTAN & ISOLDE PAMAHIN SUBMERGED MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE 2 AMERICAN SOLDIERS VENOM TRISTAN & ISOLDE	CINEMA 2000 ICE AGE 2 EIGHT BELOW TRISTAN & ISOLDE PAMAHIN SUBMERGED MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE 2 AMERICAN SOLDIERS VENOM TRISTAN & ISOLDE
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MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ority dancers go beyond their comfort zones



Nestor U. Torre

Feedback
FROM PAUL R. Mortel: "Last March 30, I viewed 'Moments of Love' at Cinema 3 at Gateway, Cubao. The theater did not [play] the Philippine National Anthem. Isn't this required?"

'Aliwan Fiesta'
THE MANILA Broadcasting Co., together with the cities of Manila and Pasay and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, is staging 'Aliwan Fiesta 2006,' grand national championship of all festivals, from April 27 to 29. Thousands of cultural dance performers from all over the country will participate in spirited street dancing that displays the richness of their respective regions' culture and traditions. Contests include the Dance Parade Competition, Float Competition and Reyna ng Aliwan beauty pageant. Huge prizes are at stake.

A grand parade will kick off the culminating activities on April 29, starting from the Quirino Grandstand and ending in front of Star City at the CCP Complex.

'The Sentinel'
KIEFER Sutherland co-stars with Michael Douglas, Kim Basinger and Eva Longoria in "The Sentinel," an action-packed thriller.

Backroom caravan
BACKROOM'S summer musical caravan hits the Ynares Center in Antipolo on April 28, and the Mt. Golf Driving Range in San Fernando, Pampanga on April 29. Other performances: May 12 at Del Rio Splash Resort in Marikina City, May 13 at South Koronada Gym and Cultural Center, also in Marikina. And May 20 at the De La Salle Gym in Bacolod City. Call 435-3808.

2ND WEEK

THE MOST AMAZING STORY OF SURVIVAL, FRIENDSHIP, AND ADVENTURE EVER TOLD.

EIGHT BELOW

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SCREEN ALL U CAN APRIL 26

WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

POWER PLANT

Blackwell Center, Manila City

SUBMERGED R13 1:35, 3:45, 5:55, 8:05, 10:15	TRISTAN AND ISOLDE R13 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15	EIGHT BELOW GP 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
D' LUCKY ONES GP 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	AMERICAN SOLDIERS R13 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25	ICE AGE 2 G 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. FOR VOUCHER INFORMATION, SEE THEATRE. MATINEE P111.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 3:00 PM - MON. TO FRI.

ICE AGE 2

Biggest Animation OF ALL TIME!

P75,000,000

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AT THE CINEMAS

G1	1 D' LUCKY ONES	2 EIGHT BELOW	3 PAMAHIN	4 SUBMERGED
G4	1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	2 D' LUCKY ONES	3 TRISTAN & ISOLDE	
GB1	1 EIGHT BELOW	2 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN		
GB3	1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	2 EIGHT BELOW	3 TRISTAN & ISOLDE	
ATC	1 EIGHT BELOW	2 D' LUCKY ONES		
AGC	1 EIGHT BELOW	2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE	3 SUBMERGED	
M2	1 D' LUCKY ONES	2 SUBMERGED		

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Teenzone Event April 21, 2006	Automatic Center Exhibit April 17 to May 2, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Child Learning Foundation's Culminating Activity April 21, 2006	Cartoon Network Summer Camp April 22, 2006

2&2 MAKE SEX

a comedy by Richard Harris & Leslie Dacson
Directed by Jay Virata

April 21, 23, 28-30 May 5-7

Rep's Globe Theatre at Onstage, Greenbelt 1

Call 8870710 or 8919999 (Ticketworld)

tickets at P500, P700 and P1000

GLORIETTA TEEN FAIR

April 21, 2006 12pm-6pm

Glorietta Activity Center

- Teen Tattoo Booth
- Teen Pix Booth
- Fashion Show (Bayo, Tomato, Converse)
- Celebrity Snag-A-Date
- Live Concert

BY BILL AMEND & LUPIN



MARVIN

PLUGGED BABY



BABY BLUES

METHODS



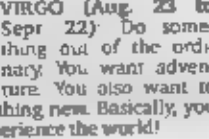
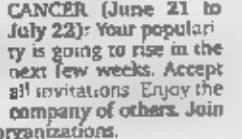
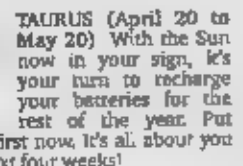
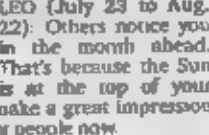
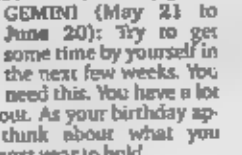
ATOMIC AND MOLECULAR

DIVINE COMEDY



BY FRANCIS DRAKE

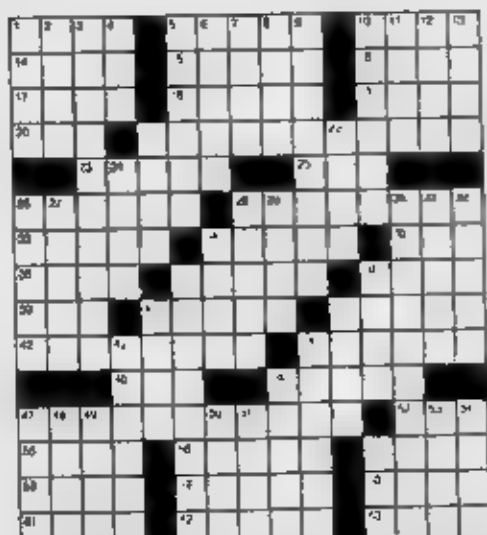
Birthdate of Elaine May writer/director, Audie Macdowell, actress, Queen Elizabeth II British monarch.



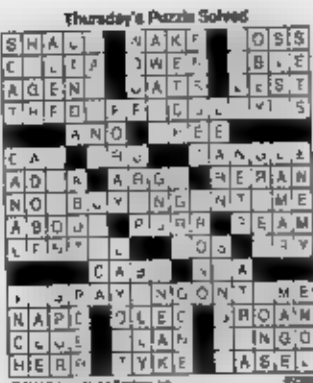
ACROSS

9 Royal Peruvian
 5 Alphabets
 10 Computer Info
 14 Audition for a part
 15 Fine-tune
 16 Showy blooms
 17 Benediced
 Bosely
 19 Boredom
 19 Hiking housing
 20 Actor Beauty
 21 Ocarina
 23 Swerved off course
 25 Rene
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 28 Pregnant
 28 Really big
 33 Transplant, as a plant
 34 Lower in spirits
 35 E's vehicle
 36 Armchair athlete's charmel
 37 Lawn
 38 The work week is over!
 39 Moray
 40 Point of view
 41 Map
 42 Making a sound chirping soon
 44 Stock rates
 45 Boxer's punch
 46 In an upright position
 47 Rabel
 52 Jaser end
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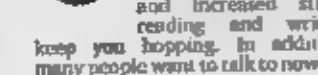
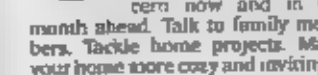
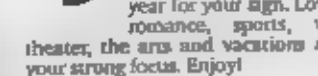
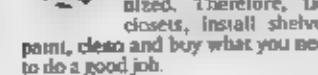
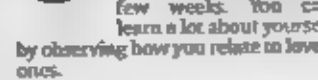
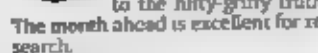
DOWN
 1 Iraq's neighbor
 2 Oahu coasts



By Donald Bracher
Arlington, TX



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BEN



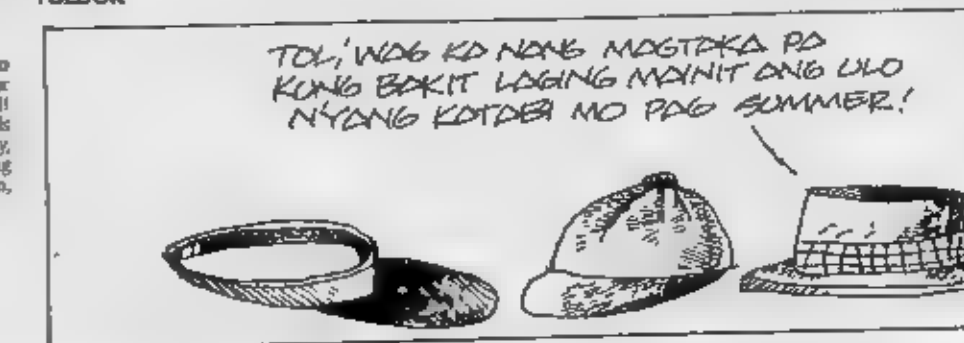
KIKO MACHINE



LOVEKNOTS



TUL DOK



Cesare for Writers' Night @ Conspiracy: 'Minimalism is for wimps'

ART AND LITERARY ICONOCLAST Cesare A.X. Syjuco is the special featured performer for "Writers' Night" at the Conspiracy Garden Cafe on April 25, 7 to 9 p.m.

Once regarded as "the Golden Boy of Philippine Art," the multi-awarded Cesare is equally known for his reclusive nature and for his daring experimental works.

Appl. titled "Cesare: A Noise From Under-

SHOW TIME
ground," the Conspiracy date is one of a series of small venue performances that prelude the release of the artist's CD album and book next month. The 15-track album showcases Cesare's prize-winning avant-garde poetry and music.

Also performing on Tuesday is Cesare's youngest daughter, 20-year-old poet and fictionist Maxine Syjuco. The eclectic event is being organized by UP Writing Director Carmela "Vim" Nadera.

"I'm basically just a brooding poet but a very loud one," Cesare says of his poetry performances. "No matter how wild I play in a record album, it's never going to be loud enough to break windows and wipe the grime off people's faces."

He will be performing one of the poems from his new album while playing solo electric guitar on a modified ESP Hybrid plugged into a barrage of high-volume "garage band" amplifiers.

"It's going to be a short and fast piece, like improv jazz on steroids. But I don't think anyone's going home thinking of it as something minimalist," says the TOYM awardee. "Minimalism is for wimps."

Tonight

Earthday Jam at Times Square.

Araneta Center with Akaielles, Ang4gettables, Lou Bonnevie, Pinikpikan, Paolo Santos, Noelle Cassandra, Radioactive Sago Project, Pupli, Kitchie Nadal, Rockstiddy, Francis M and Barbie Almalbis Winston in Concert featuring True Faith and The Dawn at Party Place in San Fernando, Pampanga

RJ 'n Friends with the Members Band at RJ Guitar Bar, Jupiter St., Makati 9th Avenue at Taverna on the Square, Greenbelt 3 K and The Boxers at Ratsky Morato Frenchie Dy at Ratsky Malate

Tomorrow

Kuh Ledesma and Bobby Soul of The Platters at the Captain's Bar of Mandarin Oriental

"Festival Dance" at Enchanted Kingdom, Sta. Rosa Laguna, 4:30 p.m.

Ogie Alcasid and Lovi at Ratsky Malate

True Faith and The Dawn at Cal Jam in Olongapo City



CESARE Syjuco

Rage at Ratsky Morato Kamikaze at Star Mall Edsa, 4 p.m.

Mc God and Company at RJ Guitar Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

Tribe of Levi at Taverna on the Square, Greenbelt 3 Flintstones and the Gang at Merk's Jed Madala at SM Makati

April 23

Katrina Halili at Metropolis Star Alabang, 4 p.m.

Aiai Delas Alas' Maggi Magic Sarep Palengke Tour at Naga Public Market Join the Club at Robinson's Place Inna

RJ "Teller" Forbes at SM Bacoor

April 24

Michael Terry at RJ Guitar Bar, Jupiter St., Makati Strings of Soul and Michaelangelo at Taverna on the Square, Greenbelt 3

April 25

Michael Terry at RJ Guitar Bar, Jupiter St., Makati



BJ "Teller" Forbes

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS APRIL 28!

A WHOLE NEW BREED OF TOURIST.

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GREGG ROULE
SANTANA ROOTSTOUR

April 28 Araneta Coliseum April 29 Clark Expo April 30 Iloilo City

Ticket prices: 2,500 / 2,000 / 1,500 / 1,000 / 500 / 200

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RADIOACTIVE SAGO PROJECT • ROCKSTEDDY
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SUBMERGED 2:00 / 2:25 / 4:30 / 7:15 / 9:40	D' LUCKY ONES 2:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40	TRISTAN & ISOLDE 1:30 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50	EIGHT BELOW 1:20 / 3:50 / 6:20 / 8:50
MOMENTS OF LOVE 2:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	ICE AGE 2 2:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:30	BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:30 / 2:30 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	EIGHT BELOW 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30
AMERICAN SOLDIERS 2:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:30	PAMAHIN 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	EIGHT BELOW 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	

ANIMALL CINEMAS

D' LUCKY ONES 12:10 / 2:15 / 4:40 / 6:15 / 8:30	PAMAHIN 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:40	SUBMERGED 12:15 / 1:40 / 4:05 / 6:30 / 8:55
MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:40 / 6:15 / 8:30	EIGHT BELOW 12:30 / 2:55 / 5:25 / 7:55	

LOG ON TO WWW.ANANETACENTERS.NET FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY & PMA ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

ARANETA COLISEUM

PBA PHILIPPINE CUP
Apr 23, 4:10 TALK N TEXT vs SAN MIGUEL
Apr. 6 30 COCA COLA vs AIR 21 EXPRESS

SANTANA ROOTS. GREG ROULE LIVE
APRIL 28, Friday 8 pm

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

ENTERTAINMENT

Miriam Quiambao, minus the hubby

HONG KONG-BASED BEAUTY QUEEN Miriam Quiambao spent Holy Week in Viñan, Ilocos Sur, minus her Italian businessman hubby, Claudio Rondinel.

The morena stunner was often seen taking lots of pictures. "It seems photography is her new hobby," said an eyewitness. "People had snapshots taken with her, too."

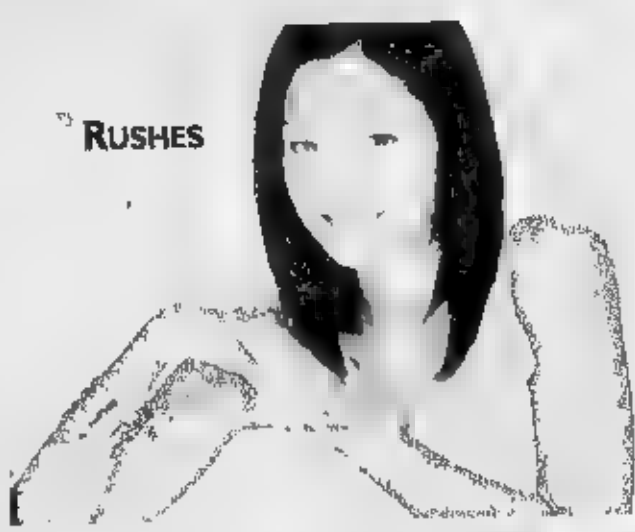


HEART and Echo: Whew, hot!

Black Saturday, sun tan day

Hot couple Jericho Rosales and Heart Evangelista hit the waves in San Juan, La Union during the holidays. The two were spotted getting a tan on Black Saturday near Echo's beach-front property.

He wore a veil
Comedian John



MIRIAM Quiambao: Snapshots of a Holy Week break, solo.

RUSHES

GMA 7's cooking show, "Mobile Kusina," starting today, taking over chores for Christine Jacob-Sandejas who is scheduled to give birth next month.

All about bodies

Some babes with the best bods are still in Boracay. At least three of them—Mylene Dizon, Nancy Castiglione and Reema Chanco—are not out there just to show off their curves. They're crew members for the Nestlé Fit In fitness fest, ongoing till tomorrow. Mylene will give belly dancing lessons, Reema, cardio boxing, Nancy, hip hop aerobics. Hip hop aerobics?



NANCY Castiglione for hip hop aerobics.



REEMA Chanco for cardio boxing.



"THAT'S So Raven" on Disney Channel

Slade back on 'Titans'

THEY'RE COOL. THEY'RE HOT. Whichever way you put it, these shows are meant to make the sizzling summer just a little bit more bearable for children.

•**"Power Rangers Dino Thunder"** starts April 30, 7:30 a.m., then weekends on Cartoon Network. A new team, Power Rangers Dino Thunder battles a new menace on earth.

•**"Acceleracers: Grand Prix"** More action weekends starting April 29, with "Ignition", May 6, "The Speed of Silence", May 13, "Breaking Point", May 20, "Ultimate Race." Also on Cartoon Network.

•**"That's So Raven."** Season 4 starts tomorrow, 6:30 p.m. on Disney Channel. Raven Baxter finds herself in a.J sorts of funny situations—as usual.

•**"The Incredibles."** Premieres on Disney Channel tomorrow, 7:30 p.m. An action-packed animated adventure about superheroes led by Bob Parr and his wife Helen. A mysterious communication orders Bob to a remote island for a top-secret assignment.

•**"Pokemon."** Premiered on Cartoon Network on April 12. Catch Ash Ketchum and his Pokemon, Pikachu on Toonami, weeknights at 7:30 p.m.

•**"The Simpsons."** First time on Cartoon Network anywhere in the world. Tune-in weeknights, 7:30 p.m., on Toonami for double episodes.

•**"Teen Titans: The End."** Premieres tomorrow, 7 p.m., on Cartoon Network, encore on Sunday, 11 a.m. Slade is back from the dead, stronger than ever, and launches an attack on the Teen Titans.

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1: 8 Below
2: Pamahilin
3: Good Scandal

1: Good Scandal
2: 8 Below
3: Pamahilin
4: D' Lucky Ones

Everyday Family Day at StarMall
Every Tuesdays Stand-Up Comedy. Every Fridays Live Acoustic Bands at Club 2 Live Set StarMall Edge. Mondays to Thursdays Live Bands. Every Fridays Stand-Up Comedy at Mark's KTV Metropolis Alabang. Ita Cabardo (Apr. 9) Pro: Acoustic Show (Apr. 22) Kalyan Hala (Apr. 23) Metropolis Alabang. River Maya (Apr. 7) Center For Pop (Apr. 23) Karaoke (Apr. 23) StarMall Edge.

JOHN and Jet: Separated at birth?

Lapuz joined the Good Friday procession in Dinaupihan, Bataan, with some friends. John is said to have worn a veil to avoid catching too much attention. By the way, there's no truth to the rumor that John is playing the role of Dawn front man Jett Pangan in a forthcoming indie movie.

Baby due in May
Donita Rose is hosting the fifth season of

Favorite ex-husband

Hollywood actress Jane Fonda just came back from a trip to Argentina with former husband Ted Turner. They remain close she told Associated Press in Atlanta. "He's my favorite ex-husband."



JANE Fonda, formerly Turner

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Re-discover the power of print and radio. Come to the PANA MediaFest. A 2-day media fair on just how effective and efficient print and radio advertising can be. Advertisers, ad agencies, media and students are invited. Admission is free. April 20-21, 10 AM to 7 PM at the Ground Floor, Old Mutual Stock Exchange Building, (Beside Ayala Tower One) Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Hosted by the Philippine Association of National Advertisers, in cooperation with United Print Media Group and the Kapitan ng mga Brodcasters ng Pilipinas (Radio Sector).

For more details contact: The PANA Secretariat
Unit 2D Torre de Salcedo, 184 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City
Tel. No.: 894-0474 to 75; 894-0012 to 13 or email to email@pana.com.ph

PROGRAM

DAY 1 (April 20, Thursday)
10:00 pm to 2:00 pm - Role of Radio in the Advertising Media Mix
2:00 pm to 3:00 pm - Harvesting the Power of Radio

DAY 2 (April 21, Friday)
12:30 pm to 1:15 pm - The Print Advertising Process
By: Mr. Gary Luby, VP for IT and Prepress, Phil Daily Inquirer
What Print Can Deliver for Cheaper, Successful Companies Which Grow Substantially Because of Print By: Ms. Hernan de Leon, President & CEO, Mediawise
The Power of Unique Properties of Print By: Leticia Manalang, Managing Director, Starcom



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BASIC CINEMATOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
A 10-day hands-on workshop on the accurate translation of the cinematographer's intentions through lighting design and camera work.

Date: April 24 - May 6, 2006
10 a.m. - 7 p.m. / Monday - Friday
w/ Cinematographer **REGIEN ROMANA**
(Spirit Warriors 2, Santa, Kuya, Matikmanita, Now that I Have You, Let The Love Begin and others...)

Tuition fee covers 16mm film camera, KODAK negatives and laboratory processing. Only 30 slots available

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"The effects are outstanding. Very effective!" - On Screen (a member, National Artist for Literature)
"This signifies the birth of a new horror director here in the Philippines."
"Donato Pardo gives a stellar performance and Jaclyn Jose arrives later in the film to give her most subtly creepy performance yet." - Cinema Reviews, award-winning director
"It's a quality film from Regal Entertainment and Regal Cinemas. Congratulations!"
- Josey Galarza, Senior Vice President of Entertainment TV Group Q&A Network, Inc.

RATINGS BY THE LEADING THEATRE BOARD

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TELEVISION
THE LATEST
DOMESTIC
IMPORTED

Q1 budget gap lower than expected

Strong revenue collection offset high spending in first 3 months

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET DEFICIT STOOD lower than what was programmed for the first quarter of the year, hitting only P67.6 billion compared with the expected P71.8-billion ceiling on account of strong revenue collection.

The Bureau of the Treasury yesterday announced that expenditures for the first three months of the year reached P272.6 billion, or higher than the P263.5 billion target. But National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the overspending was offset by

higher-than-expected revenues, which hit P205 billion compared with the program of only P191.7 billion.

Cruz said the high spending in the first quarter was due largely to the advance

Q1 BUDGET/B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

P 51.495 = \$1 ¥ 117.59 = \$1
As of 5 p.m., April 20, 2006 *As of 5 p.m., April 20, 2006

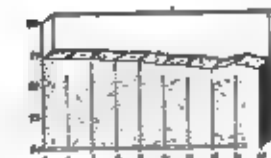
GOLD: \$621.88-623.50

per ounce Hong Kong, April 19, 2006

Shares close 0.86% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY ROSE 0.86 PERCENT TO their highest levels in more than six years, dealers said. The composite index rose 19.03 points to 2,242.76, the high for day and off a low of 2,215.18

SHARES/B3



STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

World oil rates to stay volatile, warns IMF

By Doris C. Dumlaog

OIL PRICES ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN high and volatile in the near future, weighing down on equities and exchange rates in oil-importing countries like the Philippines, an International Monetary Fund report warned.

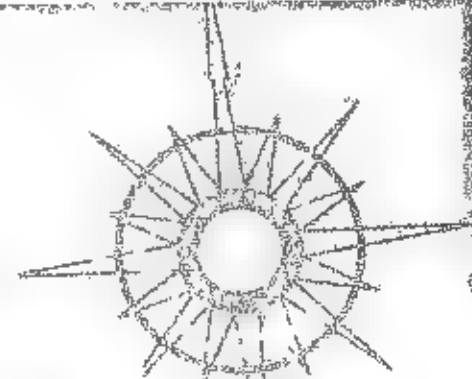
But over the longer term, consumer countries may learn to cope with oil shocks much better, depending on the government's policies and on the viability of alternative technologies.

"Many alternative energy sources that

WORLD/B2



9°25'N AND 11°15'N,
123°13'E AND 124°5'E



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Adultery 101

INSTEAD OF IMPOSING a sanction, De La Salle Greenhills even commended a taekwondo instructor who carried an on-campus affair with a very much married mother of four students.

"The (Investigation) Committee strongly recommends to Bro. President (Bernard Oca) that a memo be issued to all concerned that affirms his trust/confidence not only [in] the accused but also [in] the programs and services of their department," said committee chair Herman Rochester.

The three-member committee also cleared another male PE teacher who had been entrapped into joining the same woman into a mid-night rendezvous on the school campus. Oca, invoking St. La Salle, subsequently wrote to the complaining husband "I concur with their decision." The elite Catholic school—"An Empowered La Salle Family Committed to Excellence in the Service of God, Country and the Global Community" is its new motto—ruled that the taekwondo instructor did not violate any academic policy and never abused his position in carrying on the admitted affair.

"As to the charge that maintaining an adulterous, illicit and immoral relationship may lead to a break up of the pupil's family, the court would be in a better position to define/confirm the commission of the offense and not the school," the La Salle

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

report said.

Revolted by the decision, the father-in-law of the erring woman, a San Beda law professor, said he had all four of his grandchildren pulled out of the La Salle grade and high schools after classes ended last month.

The four children, who have since dreaded seeing their now estranged mother and their almost daily encounter with her lover, have also had to receive counseling.

"Brother Oca has made a mistake. He over-muchnessed on a Sunday evening, yet he never found time to meet and offer a few comforting words to my grandchildren," said the San Beda law professor.

Spare Don Jaime

GLOBE Telecom has expressed annoyance and dismay over the tactics of Greenmeadows residents to publicly drag Aya-a patriarch Jaime Zobel in their protest against the continued operation of a Globe cell tower in the subdivision park.

Reacting to an item in this space last Monday, Globe sent a briefing paper on the issue to show that the Aya-a-controlled telecom company has obtained all the required government permits, including

the prior approval of the Greenmeadows homeowners' association.

While agreeing that the tower has all the requisite papers, Greenmeadows protest leaders Charles Gorayeb, Manuel Agcaoili, Cecile Yujico, German Ng, and Lisa So claim that their association president, retired banker Rene Peronilla, never consulted the residents about allowing Globe to build the structure.

"If Peronilla believes that the tower is safe, he should build the cell site in his own garden," said So. "He

COCKTALES/B4

PRULINK	PRU LIFE UK 77	
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week Apr. 18, 2006	Last Week Apr. 11, 2006
Bond Fund - Peso	1 47130	1 46983
Managed Fund - Peso	1 58406	1 59031
Growth Fund - Peso	1 20897	1 20208
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1 2497	1 2466

Note: Prices represent investments of variable life insurance contracts and are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

INSULAR LIFE	Investment Funds of Wealth Builder & Wealth Secure	
	UNIT PRICES (In Php)	
	April 17, 2006	April 10, 2006
Fixed Income Fund	1 172578	1 171498
Balanced Fund	1 159306	1 158118
Equity Fund	1 130636	1 129155

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

The weekly unit prices are also available at www.insularlife.com.ph.

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Araneta contests court order on disputed estate

By Daxim L. Lucas

BUSINESSMAN GREGORIO ARANETA III is contesting a court decision that stripped him of claims over a 156-hectare property in Caloocan City.

The son-in-law of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos said the contested property called "Pangarap Village" was acquired in good faith by his family's Carmel Development Inc., and was not "illegally seized."

"Carmel acquired (these titles, clean from [Paquita] Eusebio in 1954," he said through a written statement given to the Inquirer. "Clean means there were no inscriptions of government liens or claims at the disposal of the titles of these people."

Araneta was reacting to an earlier story which reported that Caloocan City Regional Trial Court Judge Adoracion Angeles ruled that the disputed property under Carmel was part of the finer lands that were illegal seized under a 1973 Marcos decree for the benefit of the "Malacañang Homeowners Association."

"The decision is still far from being final. Araneta's statement said "Carmel has filed motion for reconsideration with the court that rendered the decision."

In a January 1988 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the Marcos decree was unconstitutional, and the subsequent titles to the disputed property null and void.

The Caloocan judge used this ruling as basis for her decision, and rejected Carmel's defense that it was an "innocent purchaser of value."

The Araneta family is missing, however, that the transaction enjoys a "presumption of regularity," especially since it is not the original purchaser of the property.

Shares close ...

From page B.

This was the best finish since Aug. 25, 1997, when the market ended at 2,260.14.

Turnover was 777 billion shares worth P199 billion (\$38.75 million).

The broader S&P-shares index advanced 13.75 points to 1,382.81.

Gainers outnumbered losers 80 to 27, with 44 stocks unchanged.

The peso was at 51.35 to the dollar by midday.

G/F SM City North Edsa

4/F SM Megamall B

2/F Greenbelt 1

3/F Power Plant Mall

BUSINESS

Corporate bond offerings seen increasing

Gov't moves to develop, boost capital market

By Michelle V. Ranao

THE BUREAU OF TREASURY IS projecting an increase in the issuance of bonds by private corporations in the short to medium term, saying the government has already put in place measures that will help boost the country's capital market.

Government securities presently account for the bulk, from 95 to 98 percent, of the total bond issues in the country, reflecting a shallow capital market where corporations do not play much of a role.

But National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the declining interest rates on government securities had set low benchmark rates for companies that intended to issue bonds of their own to fund ex-

penditure and expansion programs.

A declining interest rate on government securities would mean companies hoping to borrow from the capital market to finance projects could issue bonds at lower interest rates.

"They will be given a credit risk premium (over that of the interest rates imposed on government securities used as benchmarks). They can now borrow at a lesser cost," Cruz said.

Last Monday, Treasury bill rates declined across all maturities on account of high liquidity in the system and the government's improving fiscal position that cut its borrowing requirements, resulting in reduced supply of government securities.

The 91-day bill rate fell to its lowest in nearly four

years to only 4.6 percent. The four-year treasury bond, meanwhile, sunk to its all-time low of only 6.5 percent last Tuesday, still on account of huge demand for government securities among banks.

"What we want is to set up a capital market that is encouraging for business. Reducing the cost of doing business is imperative," Cruz said.

Cruz said the government was hoping that private companies would begin to account for a bigger share of the bond issues.

Cruz said the need to encourage companies to issue more bonds and take an active participation in the market had been magnified by the possibility of a reduced government securities issuances due to the state's improv-

ing fiscal position.

"Banks cannot merely rely on government securities. They have to spread their investments," Cruz said.

The huge demand for government securities, according to Cruz, indicates that banks do not have enough investment options. But he said the declining interest rates could open the doors for corporations to start increasing their bond issues as a means of meeting their financial requirements.

Cruz said the development of the country's capital market would also partly depend on the country's economic growth. He said the 4.8-percent gross domestic product growth rate last year would have to be increased to at least 7 percent.

Sugar prices stabilizing

By Christine A. Gaylican

RETAIL PRICES OF SUGAR have stabilized at a range of P38 to P42 per kilo as the scheduled arrival of 50,000 metric tons of imported sugar in June ended speculations in the market, the Sugar Regulatory Authority said.

SRA Administrator James Christopher Ledesma yesterday said the current price range was much lower than the P55 to P60 per kilo registered in early January.

Ledesma said sugar prices started to drop as production peaked and showed signs that the target of 2.018 million metric tons for crop year 2005-2006 would be exceeded.

As of Feb. 26, 2006, production reached 1.412 million metric tons (MT) or 70 percent of this year's production target.

Raw sugar prices have likewise gone back to normal levels of P750 to P900 per 50-kilo bag from a high of P1,200 per bag, as the National Food Authority (NFA) started buying

raw sugar to ensure supply.

Archie B. Amara, Sugar Master Plan Foundation Inc. executive director, said the shipment of the 50,000 MT of imported sugar should not be allowed until June 1.

"The import should not come in until June 1. We're still at the peak of the milling season," he said. Amara said the priority was to fill up the country's export commitment first.

The sugar industry has already started shipping portion of its 216,438 MT sugar quota to the United States for this year.

This quota level represents an increase of 58 percent or 80,000 MT from 137, 353 MT in the previous years.

Ledesma said sugar exporters were also given the authority to import this year. These are All Asian Countertrade Inc., ED&F Man Holdings Ltd., Amerop Sugar Corp., Sugar and Allied Industries Ltd., Busco Sugar Milling Company Inc., La Perla Sugar Export Corp. and Delmax Trading Inc.

Q1 budget gap

From page B1

payments of the government's loans interests rather than the over-shooting of operating expenses. He said capital expenditures and personnel expenses were maximized according to program, but were kept within target, to achieve the government's pump-priming goal.

Data from the Bureau of the Treasury showed that interest payments reached P103.6 billion compared with the program of only P96 billion, as the government moved to frontload the payment of its maturing obligations for the year.

On the revenues side, all three major collecting agencies—the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of the Treasury—all surpassed their targets.

The BIR collected P135 billion compared with its P131.4-billion goal, while the BOC hit P42.3 billion compared with its target of P38.6 billion. The Treasury collected P17.3 billion versus its P11.60-billion programmed collection for the period.

Cruz said the improving revenue collection would give the Philippines a better chance in attaining a favorable outlook from international ratings firms.

According to the treasurer, the government has already shifted its policy to improve its fiscal position from belt-tightening to pump-priming, which is coupled with increase in revenue collection.

That way, the country could boost economic growth while it sticks to its budget targets, he said.

Cement makers seek shield

By Ramez W. Domingo

LOCAL CEMENT MAKERS ARE SEEKING protection for the industry by including cement in the list of products to be submitted to the on-going World Trade Organization negotiations for exclusion from a tariff reduction program.

The Cement Manufacturers Association of the Philippines said cement should be listed as a sensitive product while manufacturing it should be recognized as a strategic industry.

One of the topics up for discussion in the WTO's non-agricultural market access negotiations is the identification of products that would not be assigned a maximum allowable tariff.

Currently, WTO recognizes only five "vulnerable" sectors whose products may form part of the so-called exclusion list—fishery, footwear, petrochemicals, iron and steel, and automotive parts.

"The government should push for the listing of cement as a vulnerable sector considering that it is actually a strategic industry," Cemmap executive director Ernesto Ordoñez said.

He explained that an industry could be considered strategic if it has significant contribution to the economy and if it has a pivotal role in affecting major sectors in the country.

"Cement manufacturing is such an industry because of the thousands of people it employs directly and indirectly, the multiplier effect it entails because of its anchor or catalytic position, and its critical role in achieving agro-industrial development," Ordoñez said.



Cemmap wants cement manufacturing to be recognized as a strategic industry.

The Cemmap official reiterated that local manufacturers continued to suffer from excess capacity, with total utilization reaching only 62 percent.

Local cement makers suffered a setback when the Department of Trade and Industry dismissed last month Cemmap's petition for definitive safeguard duties on imports following a Supreme Court decision that said there was no serious threat of injury to the domestic industry to warrant such protection.

Potential disaster in World Trade Organization

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

TRADE SECRETARY PETER FAVILA should be commended for making an unprecedented bold move. As the Philippine delegation head of the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong last December 2005, he designated private sector leaders as advisers for and official delegates to the WTO negotiations.

Agriculture Secretary Domingo Pangasinan did likewise. As a result, the Philippine delegation was able to achieve significant gains at the December meeting. However, further negotiations this year in Geneva may result in losing these gains if the private sector's active participation is stopped.

April 19-21 negotiations

Today is the third day of the WTO negotiations which started on April 19 on WTO's Non-Agricultural Market Access Agreement (NAMA). This covers all industries and the fisheries sector.

Buddy Dela Cruz, coordinator of Kilusang Mangingada which is the largest coalition of small fisherfolk today, says: "Fisheries should be part of the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (AOA), rather than grouped with industries in WTO's NAMA. We have to fight extra hard for our interests to be understood and protected, especially since we constitute both the largest and the poorest sector in NAMA."

The figures below, taken from the WTO's Trade Report 2004, are relevant to these negotiations.

NAMA (Industries and Fisheries)

	India	Mexico	Brazil	Thailand	Philippines
	34.3	34.9	30.8	24.2	23.4
	27.7	17.1	14.1	14.2	4.3

A bound rate is a maximum tariff rate negotiated between the WTO and a country for a specific item. An applied rate is the rate a country decides on its own for that same item. We can make three conclusions from the above table. First is that we have the lowest negotiated average bound rate, despite our poor preparedness for global competition. The second is that we have the lowest average applied rate. The difference here is far more significant, where our 4.3 percent rate provides very little protection for our products compared to other countries. We have found from other documents that this rate may be 7 percent, but we are using the WTO report for cross-country comparisons.

The third conclusion showed that while we had the option to bring our applied rates closer to our bound rates as allowed by WTO, we instead engaged in what former WTO appellate body chair Justice Florentino Feliciano calls "unilateral disarmament." While the main problem today is our own policy of too rapid liberalization, we have to fight for at least preserving our flexibility to increase our applied rates to close to our current WTO bound levels since these are already very low.

For example, if a certain product with an applied rate of 4 percent has its bound rate decreased from 23 percent to 10 percent, we will forever be constrained to a maximum of 10 percent. This will be unfair, especially if we see our neighboring countries applying much higher tariffs.

Mario Jose Sereno of the Fair Trade Alliance says: "Unfortunately, this is happening today. Our highest applied rate is 30 percent, compared to Malaysia's 300 percent, Indonesia's 170 per-

cent, India's 160 percent, and Thailand's 80 percent."

Common stand

Two days ago, five umbrella organizations took a common stand on a proposed minimum position for the WTO NAMA negotiations. These groups are the Fair Trade Alliance, Alyansa Agrikultura (representing fisheries), the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Federation of

Philippine Industries and the Philippine Exporters Foundation.

They proposed higher coefficients and mark-ups for the Swiss formula used to determine the pace of tariff cut (a target of 50 and a minimum of 35 instead of 25), a higher level of tariff lines exempted from required WTO bound rates (10 percent instead of 5 percent), a longer implementation time frame (10 years as unanimously recommended by the G30 group of 30 developing nations for the agriculture agreement, instead of five years), and an adjustment number so we can take credits for having voluntarily reduced our tariffs to

very low levels during our "unilateral disarmament" (1.5 signifying a 50 percent credit, instead of no credit at all).

For fisheries, this would mean that, if bound, our very low applied rate of 7 percent will be bound at 32 percent instead of 14 percent. This would still be low, considering other countries' much higher tariffs and massive subsidies, while our fisheries have practically no subsidies.

Similar benefits would apply to our industrial products if the private sector position is adopted. If this position is rejected, the current average 23.5 percent tariff rate will likely be decreased to 12 percent. This would be a disaster for our ailing economy.

It is hoped that our government negotiators support and continue Secretary Favila's bold initiative of involving the private sector in the ongoing WTO negotiations and listening to their views. Our country and our people deserve no less.

(The author is Agriwatch chair for inquiries and suggestions, email: agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635.)

Cocktales

From page B3

could use the P60,000 monthly rent, from Globe, as well as the daily dose of radiation."

Money-go-round

THE ANNUAL stockholders' meeting of the International Container Terminal Services Inc. is almost always done within half an hour, but yesterday's meet was particularly quick, about 20 minutes "just like the people's initiative," quipped ICTSI chair/CBO Enrique Razon Jr.

A retired general has paced on the block his six-bedroom, two-story house with a four-car

garage and a swimming pool in a 400-square-meter property within the Fort's AFP Officers' Village for P18.5 million.

Heard through the grapevine

LIKE their Pampanga counterparts who want an exit in every town traversed by the Subic-Tarlac expressway, the Bulacan mayors have also been lobbying and pressuring North Rail to include a stop in their respective towns, thus threatening to transform what originally was conceived as an Airport Express into a Milk Run Local.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pkitd.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com.)

LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
Security Services for CY 2006 at the LTO Central Office

The Land Transportation Office, through the General Fund (101) intends to apply the sum of Five Million Two Hundred Seventy Five Thousand Six Hundred Pesos (P5,275,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of payment for the Security Services for CY 2006 at the LTO Central Office. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

The Land Transportation Office now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the same. The required delivery schedule will be indicated in the approved Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRRA) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least 60% interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents. 7B. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Sub-Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P10,000.00, in the form of cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Land Transportation Office will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on May 5, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at the LTO-Library, East Avenue, Quezon City. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before May 17, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following form:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bids
1. Cash certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half Percent (1.5%)
3. Surety Bond	Two and a half Percent (2.5%)
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%)

Late bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on May 17, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at LTO-Library, East Avenue, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Land Transportation Office reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Land Transportation Office
Atty. Jimmy G. Pesigan, Chairman, BAC
East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 821-9077 - telefax
Engr. Roberto S. Se, Chairman, BAC Sub-Committee
Property Section, LTO, East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 8282016 - telefax

(Sign) ATTY. JIMMY G. PESIGAN
BAC Chairman

MANUEL LEGASPI JOSON, JR.

*Passed away on April 16, 2006
at the age of 62.*

He was born in Talavera, Nueva Ecija.

He left behind his wife **Marjorie N. Joson** and children **Rianne** and **Vince, Toy** and **Pepe**.

His remains lie at the Camella II, Talon Las Piñas Chapel in Camella Homes II in Las Piñas City.

He will be laid to rest on April 23 at the Golden Haven Memorial Park on Quirino Avenue in Las Piñas after the 9 a.m. Mass at the Camella Homes II chapel.

His loved ones and friends are requesting the pious readers for prayers for his soul.

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." — Romans 8:38-39

We remember dearly

CARLOS MIGUEL B. PALANCA

ON HIS 3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY
APRIL 22, 2006

Masses will be offered tomorrow,
April 22, 2006 at the following churches:

Santuario de San Antonio Parish 7:30 a.m.
Forbes Park, Makati City

San Isidro Parish 6:00 a.m.
Taft Avenue, Manila

St. James the Great Parish 6:20 a.m.
Ayala Alabang Village,
Muntinlupa, Metro Manila

CLASSIFIEDS



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
880 Quezon Ave., Quezon City, Metro Manila 1108
Tel. Nos. 372-5057 * 372-5061
Fax Nos. 372-5048 372-5042

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) invites PhilGEPS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items.

Item/Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)	End-User Agency
Supply Materials and Installation of 29 units Aircondition	P2,699,250.00	May 2, 2006 10:00 AM	May 15, 2006	PS500.00	BFAR

The Bid documents shall be available at the BFAR Property Section starting April 24, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be at BFAR Conference Room. The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three sealed envelopes in the bid located at the above-mentioned address.

For more information, please call the BAC-Secretariat at Tel. Nos. 373-7446 & 372-5052.

BFAR reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and/or this invitation. BFAR further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) MALCOLM L. SARMENTO, JR.
Director

(PDI April 21, 2006)



NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that GENERAL TUNA CORPORATION is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as New Producer of Processed Tuna on a Pioneer status at an annual capacity of 170,100 cases with project site located at Bay Tumbler, General Santos City, South Cotabato.

Any person with valid objections on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA
Director

Project Evaluation and Registration Department
(PDI-April 21, 2006)

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PCCI ANNUAL MEETING

OF VOTING
MEMBERS &
ELECTION OF
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2:00 PM, 20 May 2006
Lakandula Function Room
Sulo Hotel, Quezon City
Deadline for submission
of proxies
5:00 PM, 15 May 2006
at the PCCI Office



OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Vigilante Road, Quezon City

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS (In Compliance with R.A. 7041)

OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF LEGAL COUNSEL

I. GRAFT INVESTIGATION & PROSECUTION OFFICER II, Item No. OMBIA-GIO2-35-1998, SG-27

Education: Bachelor of Laws; Experience: 4 years of relevant experience; Training: 24 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080 (SAR)

Applicants should submit within ten (10) calendar days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address the following requirements:

- 1) A letter stating the position applied for
- 2) Only accomplished Personal Data Sheet (CSC Form 217);
- 3) "Ex" picture (colored);
- 4) *Bar/Board Rating or CSC Certificate of Eligibility;
- 5) *Transcript of Records;
- 6) *Certificates of Seminars/Training Attended;
- 7) *Service Records or Certificates from previous/present employers stating the positions assumed and corresponding actual duties and responsibilities (if applicable);
- 8) *Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
- 9) *Statement duly signed by the applicant as to any relatives within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, currently employed with the Office of the Ombudsman.

*Where photocopies are filed, the documents must be certified as true copies by the proper authorities or the applicant may present the originals to the Human Resource Management Office for comparison with the photocopies.

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PANAAD SA NEGROS Schedule of Activities

Pay-negros Negros
Foundation Inc.

APRIL 21 FRIDAY (PRE-PANAAD EVENTS)		6-6:30 p.m.	ABS-CBN's "TV PATROL BACOLOD" @ Panaad
7:00 a.m.	Panaad Tour of Negros (Cycling): Sipalay - Bacolod, 175 km (NOCFED); April 22 - DSB-San Carlos 70 km; April 23 - San Carlos-Silay-Panaad 150 km	7:00 p.m.	Negros Songfest: Original Songgo Composition (Park Stage)
8:00 a.m.	Mobile Passporting & Info Advocacy (2F Stadium, North & South Wings)	9:00 p.m.	Best of Negros Cultural Performances (Stadium)
7:00 p.m.	Superferry-Sponsored Concert (Panaad Stadium) Featuring: FREESTYLE Band		
APRIL 22 SATURDAY DAY 1		APRIL 28 WEDNESDAY DAY 5	
6:00 a.m.	Hatwa sa Panaad with Ching (Football Field)	8:00 a.m.	UPLBAA Annual Organic Farming Seminar (2nd Level, Stadium)
8:00 a.m.	Thanksgiving Mass (2F Stadium, Center)		LGU Swimming (Panaad Swimming Pool up to April 27)
9:00 a.m.	Signing of MOA on OFW Helpline (2F Stadium)	7:00 p.m.	"Negros Pop Idol" / Negros Songfest, Interpretation (Park Stage)
	Opening Ceremonies for:	9:00 p.m.	Technical Run: Lin-ay sang Negros (Stadium)
	* Theme Pavilions/Trade Fair (Panaad Grounds, 10 a.m. Daily)		
	* Organic Food Festival (G/F Stadium, North Wing, 10 a.m. Daily)	APRIL 27 THURSDAY DAY 6	
	* Festival Costumes & Photo Exhibit (G/F Stadium, 10 a.m. Daily)	8:00 a.m.	Panaad Livelihood Skills Competition (TESDA, 2F Stadium)
	* Garden Show (Panaad Grounds, 10 a.m. Daily)	1:00 p.m.	Organic Vegetable Seminar (2F Stadium)
	2nd Day Mobile Passporting & Information Advocacy (2F Stadium)	3:00 p.m.	Latin Dance Sport Competition (Multi-Purpose Gym, Capitol)
	PYDC-PHO Broodletting (Clinic, G/F Stadium)	8:00 p.m.	Lin-ay sang Negros Pre-Pageant & Talent Night (Stadium)
10:00 a.m.	Inauguration of Korean-Negros Occ., Philippines Friendship Building		
	Provincial Veterinary Training Center (Gabusao St.-North Capitol Road)	APRIL 29 FRIDAY DAY 7	
1:00 p.m.	"Best of Festival Dances" Competition (Stadium Grounds)	8:00 a.m.	2nd Negros Panaad National Age-Group Swims Fest (Panaad Pool up to April 29)
4:00 p.m.	Opening Ceremony (Stadium)	9:00 a.m.	Capitol Employees Pop Squad Competition (PACE - Covered Court)
	Fireworks Display		Tractor Derby (Back of Cabanas/Former Horse-Back Riding Area)
8:00 p.m.	PINOY BIG BROTHER SHOW @ Panaad (Stadium) Featuring: First Batch Housemates & MS. KEANNA REEVES, Big Winner, Celebrity Edition	1:00 p.m.	Vice Mayor's League of the Philippines 16th National Convention Opening Ceremony (Bacolod Convention Plaza Hotel)
		7:00 p.m.	Capitol Employees' Night (PACE - Covered Court)
		8:00 p.m.	UNILEVER-Sponsored Concert (Stadium) Featuring: Bamboo Band, Yasmien Kurdi, Jerome Sola, Chris Lawrence, Tata Villaroel & Jersey Marquez
APRIL 23 SUNDAY DAY 2			
8:00 a.m.	Hatwa sa Panaad with Ching (Football Field)	APRIL 29 SATURDAY DAY 8	
11:00-12m	ABS-CBN's "AMGA" @ Panaad	8:00 a.m.	Hatwa sa Panaad with Ching (Football Field)
1:00 p.m.	Opening of Panaad Derby (Covered Court)		Mambukal Team Relay
2:00 p.m.	Finish Line Ceremony for Panaad Negros Tour (Park Stage)	8:00 a.m.	Panaad Golf Competition (VMLP - NOGCC/Merapen up to April 30)
4:00 p.m.	National Dog Agility Competition - K&Dog Show (Stadium Grounds)		Panaad Shoot Fast (Camp Montalibano up to April 30)
8:00 p.m.	Pop Dance Showdown (Stadium)		BMX Competition (Panaad Tennis Court)
	PCL Night (Park Stage)	8:00 a.m.	Tractor Derby (Back of Cabanas/Former Horse-Back Riding Area)
		11:00 - 12m	50th RP-Japan Friendship Year (Ishiwata Bath House, Mambukal)
APRIL 24 MONDAY DAY 3		8:00 p.m.	ABS-CBN's "SABADO BARKADA" (Live Point)
8:30-7 a.m.	ABS-CBN's "THE MORNING SHOW" @ Panaad		Lin-ay sang Negros Pageant (Stadium)
8:00 a.m.	Chess Tournament (3rd Floor Meeting Room, up to April 27)		Hosted by: TJ MANOTOC
1:00 p.m.	Volleyball (Softball Field, up to April 27)		Guests: 2005 Miss International PRECIOUS LARA QUGAMAM (E. KYUCHIRO YAMAZAKI, Japanese Ambassador to RP)
	2nd Day of Panaad Derby (Covered Court)		
	Taskwondo (2nd Floor South Wing up to April 25)	APRIL 30 SUNDAY DAY 9	
4:00 p.m.	Folk Dance Competition (Park Stage)	8:00 a.m.	Hatwa sa Panaad with Ching (Football Field)
8:00 p.m.	CONCERT: CUESHE (Stadium)	9:00 a.m.	Seafoods & Fruits Festival (Panaad Grounds)
		3:00 p.m.	Closing Ceremony with Presentation of Winners (Stadium)
APRIL 25 TUESDAY DAY 4			Fireworks Display
8:00 a.m.	Athletics (Track Oval, up to April 28)	8:00 p.m.	MUSICAL-COMEDY SHOW: ALLAN K. w/ TERI ONOR (Stadium)
1:00 p.m.	3rd Day & Championship, Panaad Derby (Covered Court)	11:00 p.m.	Panaad Coordinators' Night (Baiy Kalamay)
	Boxing (Cabana Area, up to April 28, 2pm)		
2:00 p.m.	Banda Del, Banda Diklo (Secondary Level)		

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Some foreign banks violate agri-agra lending rule

Branch network seen too limited

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS SAID certain foreign banks operating in the country might have violated the mandatory lending provision of the Agri-Agra Law.

This provision requires banks to lend to the agriculture and agrarian sectors 25 percent of their loan portfolio.

A top BSP official said some foreign banks, given their limited branch network, would rather pay the monetary penalty for non-compliance to the agri-agra rule than devote a quarter of their portfolio to this sector.

During the Monetary Board meeting yesterday, a P2.5 million monetary penalty on a foreign bank was discussed. The BSP, however, refused to name the bank.

The BSP official said some banks found it easier to shoulder the fines given the higher risks of lending to the farm sector, especially for foreign banks which usually focus on corporate and high-net worth individual accounts.

Aside from their limited branch network, the foreign banks' compliance to the agri-agra law was also being constrained by their concentration in urban areas.

In general, commercial banks are reluctant to pump in more funds to the farm sector, citing difficulty in scouting for viable borrowers.

Universa and commercial banks resort to alternative measures, such as those provided by Republic Act No. 7721 to fully comply with the rule.

RA 7721, which liberalized the entry of foreign banks, considers development loans—such as those extended to educational institutions and hospitals—as alternative compliance to the agri-agra mandatory lending provision.

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WEDNESDAY
APRIL 19, 2006
PAGES 1-12

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Mommy! Want to get a
Travel Bag.

FREE?
See page C3



BROWN-AND-BRONZE python bag
(P999), bronze brocade slippers
(P1,099), piled-on assorted multi-
strand necklaces (P299 each),
white-and-blue pearl bracelet (P299)

TAKING INSPIRATION FROM the classic Celso Ad Castillo movie, "Ang Pinakamagandang Hayop sa Balat ng Lupa," Wade's current campaign adds just the right touch of tropical drama to an already sizzling season. It resurrects the controversial white kamison and the "wet look" that were the fashion statement from steamy scenes of Tagalog movies from the 1970s.

"Pinakamaganda" presented an iconic image from the 1970s: an enigmatic woman in raw white riding a horse sans saddle on the seashore, or bathing in the sea against a setting sun.

Picking up the cinematic cue, Wade favors white in its summer campaign. White is perfect for showing off sexy, tanned legs. Wade makes them look sexier, with footwear awashed in earth tones like brown, tan, beige and chocolate—all perfect with white.

Flats step forward as the ultimate in summer chic. Whether strappy or in thongs, they are made hotter with faux gem embellishments.

Ankle-strapped espadrilles and wedges with cork or rope-trimmed heels also dominate summer's coolest.

Shoes are made more exciting with antique gold eyelets, studs, buckles, grommets and colored faux gem appliques. Textured shoes made of rich fabrics in brocade and even faux snakeskin or lizard raise temperatures even higher.

Wade also has bags, belts, shades and jewelry. Bags make a bold statement in luxurious colored skins, particularly snakeskin or python. This season's collection also comes bewitchingly bejeweled. Gold, glittery or an-

WET/C2



BLACK structural leather handbag (P999), double-strand beaded necklace (P299)

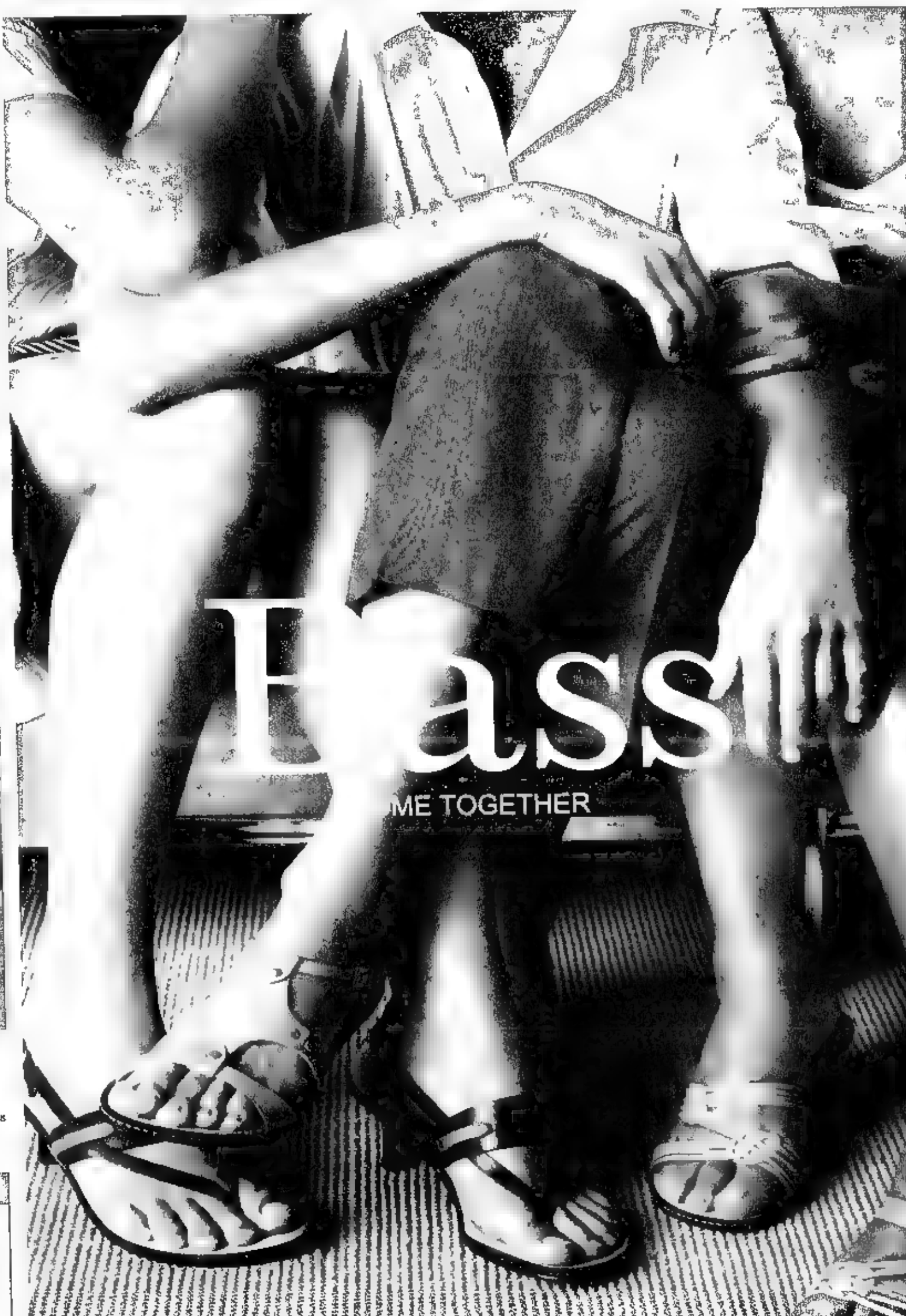
SHOES, BAGS, ACCESSORIES WADE
PHOTOGRAPHY KEN GO
ART DIRECTION MIKE DE GUZMAN (MGP)
STYLING GEORGE PALMIANO (MGP)
HAIR AND MAKEUP RED LOPEZ OF HAIRBYTES SALON EASTWOOD, JBS
MODELS AGATHA DE ALMEIDA AND PAOLO HAN OF T-MODELS
CLOTHES FOLDED & HUNG AND POP
SHOT ON LOCATION AT MONTENAP BEACH CLUB
IN BAGUIO, BATAAN

THIS ISSUE

The best and the worst
of Philippine Fashion Week /C4

From writer
to fashion princess /C5

Inno Sotto's
'Secret Garden' /C6



Bassini

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Gateway Mall, Araneta Center • SM Baguio • Ayala Cebu • SM Davao • Rustan's Makati

C1



HOT TEE. Tank tops in punchy colors paired with skinny capris and long-sleeved shirts are afternoon delights.

Call it The Power of Two—with Broadway darling Lea Salonga and new image model Danielle Cojuangco, Bayo puts the spotlight on The Great Filipina

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANTONIO M. PANGLOS
STYLING: LILY BLU
OF BOUTIQUE
SHIRT: 3/4 SLEEVED COME
HAIR AND MAKEUP: A. SACARD
MODELS: NORA SERRAS
OF ADHATE
CLOTHES: BAYO



KNOT PICKED.
Button-down shirt + tank top
+ crocheted cardigan = a three-way tie

Tea for TWO

GREEN MANGO AND BAGOONG, sago and gulaman, Century tuna and rice—there are some things that just work well together, that don't make sense without the other.

I take my chamomile tea with milk and sugar, my French fries with Knorr seasoning and mayo, and I have the two best assistants in the world, Kat and Maureen.

Call it The Power of Two (sung with me now, "so we're okay, we're fine.")—just like the new billboard campaign of Bayo, which features Broadway darling Lea Salonga and Danielle Cojuangco, the newest face of the clothing line. It's like having two gems with one store.

"Bayo" in Ilonggo means "dress," and since 1992, the brand has been doing just that—dressing up today's Filipinas with classic pieces in yummy colors. Along the way, it has become a staple in every fashionista's closet, evolving into a brand we are proud to call Filipino.

And with its image models, Bayo is just as eager to put the spotlight on The Great Filipina. Lea Salonga, whose portrayal of Kim in Miss Saigon had countless little girls crooning

about solo saxophones and longing for that perfect cheongsam, established Bayo as a frontrunner in the local retail industry.

Today, Danielle Cojuangco, a 20-year-old straight-A Industrial Engineering major (at Stanford, no less) and accomplished equestrienne (complete with an individual gold medal at an international comp) with an impressive pedigree at that (granddaughter of Danding Cojuangco), is the new Bayo girl. And, oh, did I mention she's quite the head-turner?

These two great gals in their great billboards show the fun, fresh and relaxed styles of Bayo. But they're not the only show-stoppers that proprietress Corcor Bitong have got up her sleeve.

Her Bayo Kids tees have become a phenomenon, what with their rainbow colors and witty statements like "legally spiced" and "save your drama for your mama" and "drink responsibly" with a milk carton photo on it. Super cute.

Kids, especially my daughter Aryanna, can't get enough of it. Even grownups with kids' size figures (not fair!) have become the biggest hoarders of these tee tees. I think it's about time Bayo makes some for grownup fashion babies.

Something fun, something classic. Some-



BAYO image models Lea Salonga and Danielle Cojuangco

thing for the baby, something for the lady. Bayo has come up with a great combination that's got the style mamas trooping to its stores, mixing and matching to their heart's delight—not to mention that baby-powder scent that emanates from the stores!

Truly fresh, fun and Filipino.

E-mail author ifashion@inquirer.com.ph



DENIM SERVED. From seashore to street, bikini tops and cover-up shirts mixed with denim add urban appeal.

ASPIRANT COVER-UPS



TAHTI
Turt, P699

BEACH-AHOLICS, FASHION-ISTAS and stylish sun goddesses rejoice!

Thanks to FandH Beach, you now have a fresh pick of glam cover-ups to complement those it's-it'se bikinis or chic, cut-out mailots. Half the fun of going to the beach is building a fab wardrobe that will make you stand out from the maddening sarong-clad crowd. Folded and Hung's collection of chic beachwear provides you with the best opportunity to do so.

The collection is for women like you, who are always on the lookout for that perfect, fashionable foil to disguise their flaws and accentuate their best features. Not everyone's born with Giselle's long, cellulite-free legs and slim, toned body, after all.

The collection of beach cover-ups, which is inspired by '50s glamorous screen goddess Grace Kelly in the classic movie "High Society" will surely make any woman shine like a superstar. Take your pick from adorable little

APPLES' PICKINGS



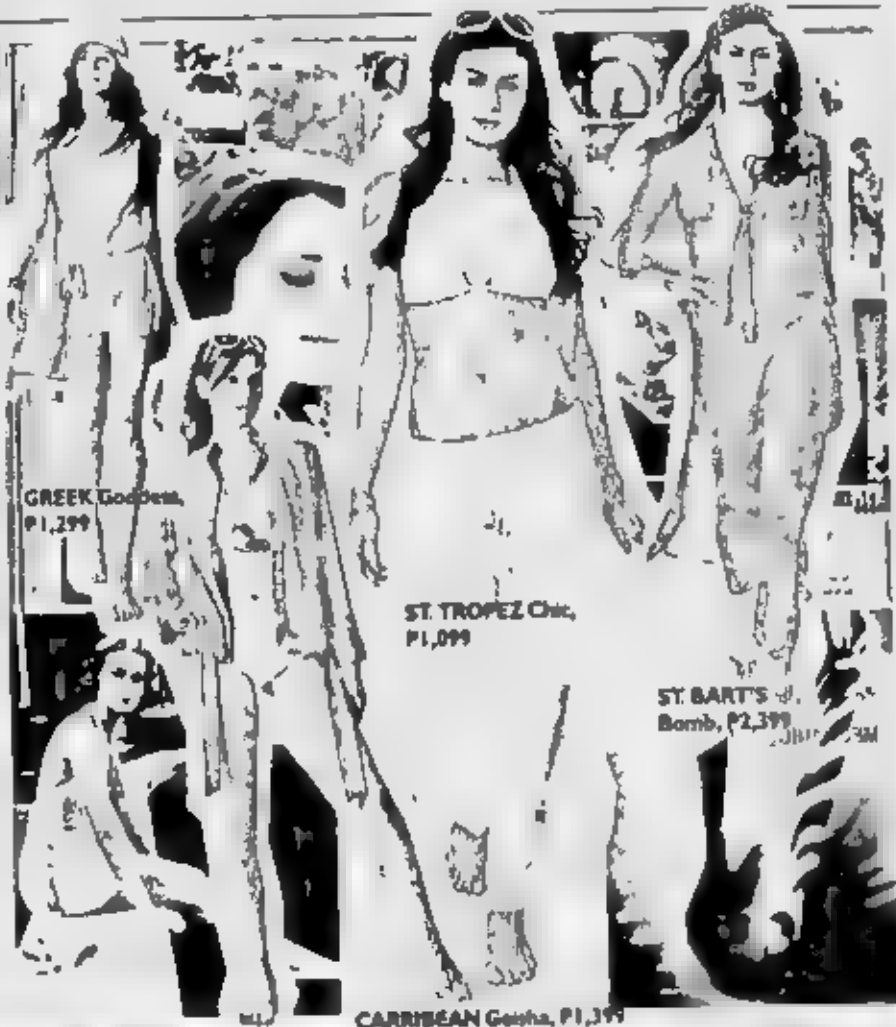
Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

hibiscus embroidered terrycloth robes, dramatic chiffon blouses, seriously sexy togas or graphic zebra print tunics.

The best part about these cover-ups is that you can wear most of them from the beach to the streets. So, you get real value for your hard-earned bucks. Match any of these pieces with tank tops, city shorts, leggings or ubiquitous blue jeans. All you need is a little imagination and derring-do.

As always, choose a cover-up that complements your personality. It's also important to pick one that provides just the right amount of coverage based on your comfort level. The ultimate goal, of course, is to look fashionably chic and uncontrived while covering-up imperfections. Self-consciousness will defeat the purpose of this sartorial exercise. So, dress or undress with conviction, if you please. A healthy dose of self-confidence is a must!

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph



GREEK Goddess, P1,299

ST. TROPEZ Chic, P1,099

ST. BART'S Bomb, P2,399

CARRIBEAN Goddess, P1,399

Wet and wild and

From page C1

tiqued, is the color standard for accessories: be they piled on necklaces, cuffs, bangles or ear rings. Belts are just as ornamental with studs, rivets, gold or bronze trims and faux jewels.

Wade branches are at 3/F Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati; G. L. Padre Plaza Wing, Robinsons Place Manila; 3/F, East Wing, Robinsons Galleria; 2/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall; 2/L, Annex Bldg., SM City North EDSA; The Shops Unimart Greenhills; G/F Gensan Mall, of Divisoria; G. L. Mall Aranzeta Center and G. L. Main Bldg.



The long and short of it

by one dressing room, models had to traverse the ramp's entire length and breadth twice before they could do a quick change. Therein lay the show's strengths as well as its dilemmas.

Unlike in "Beloved," where guests viewed Sotto's pieces on an elevated ramp inside a darkened ballroom, "Allegra" offered them the chance to examine the collection up close and personal. And due to the super-long ramp, models lingered in the spotlight much longer than they should.

If familiarity breeds contempt in a friendship, a vantage point as close, as well-lit and as extended as "Allegra" allowed the audience to get glimpses of certain unflattering details they shouldn't have seen (tarnish in fashion design parlance): pins on the lace, unhemmed and fraying hems, and dirt and debris from God knows where that clung stubbornly to the gowns' hems and trains.

Were some of the pieces rushed for the show?

Sotto said he had to resort to using pins in order to keep the expensive Chantilly lace in place. Sewing it to the gowns wasn't possible because some of the lace had already started to deteriorate with time. As for those unsightly dirt and debris, there was really nothing he could do about them.

The gowns, which had a layer of tulle underneath, would really gather all sorts of stuff in the dressing room. In lieu of a carpeted floor, models had to walk on a dirt floor," he said.

To Sotto's ardent admirers, everything he says is taken as gospel truth. To his harshest critics, however, such an explanation probably borders on the palusot. We leave it up to you to decide.

But having covered two of Sotto's previous shows before "Alle-

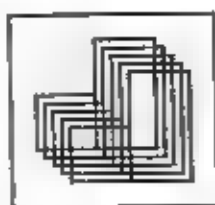
gra," I find his latest pieces a bit wanting compared to the grand and dramatic stuff he showed in "Beloved."

As far as chic factor goes, his current collection is several notches lower next to the snappy chiffon numbers he did in

"Over the Moon."

The brilliant Sotto sets the fashion agenda, but he may become his own worst enemy. "Allegra" was a case of too little, too hurried.

E-mail the author at averagea@inquirer.com.ph



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APR 17-MAY 1

Extreme Summer

April 21-22
2/L Carousel Court
Chris Sports &
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A Mixed Martial Arts Event

April 28-30
2/L Carousel Court
2nd JRF (Jaime R. Fresnedi)
Taekwondo Championship

April 21-28-30
1/L The Gardens Parking Lot
"Passion for Speed"
by City Kart Racing

April 28-30
2/L Carousel Court
Renee Grace
Rose Villa
"Summer
Dance Festival"

April 29
2/L Carousel Court
Tamiya Competition
by Gameworx

April 30
2/L Carousel Court
Rumble at the Mall
Elorde Boxing Fights

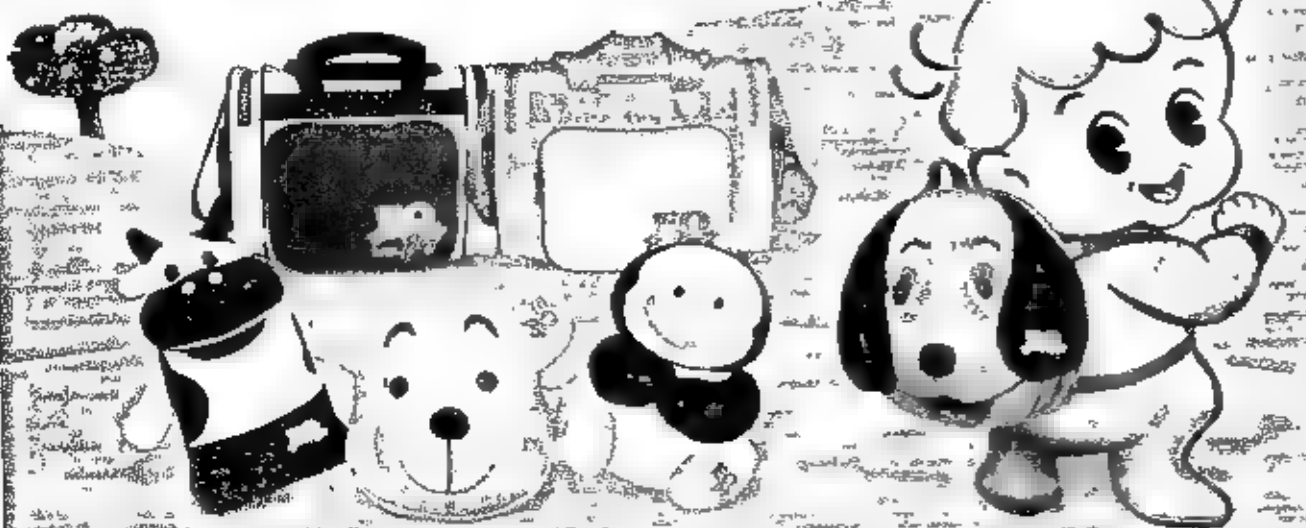
May 1
2/L Main Entrance
Terry Larrazabal Bike Fest
(Exhibit and Bike Clinic)

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VII. Premium items will be delivered until 60 days from end of promo period.

VIII. Consumers may join as many times as they want.

IX. Prizes are non-transferable to cash.

X. Entries that must be qualified 15 days after the promo period.

For more information, please visit www.eqdry.com



THE BEST AND THE WORST OF PHILIPPINE FASHION WEEK



JUN Escario



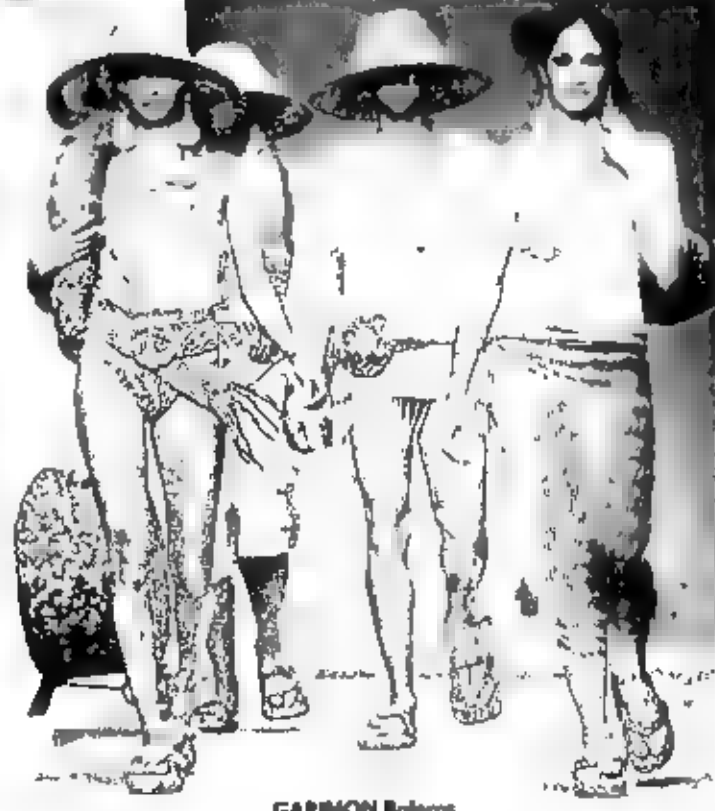
MICH Dulce



VEEJAY Flores



TIPPI Ocampo



GARMON Roleros

Fashion Smorgasbord

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Jim Guino Punzalan

AFTER A CATASTROPHIC FIRST NIGHT, THE recently concluded Philippine Fashion Week was somewhat able to regain its shaky footing on Day 2 as it presented clothes from a smorgasbord of designers grouped under "New Generation."

There was no dearth of ideas as "New Generation" stalwarts Jun Escario, Tippi Ocampo, Garmion Roleros, Mich Dulce, Dexter Aazas, Arles Lagbat and M. Barretto came up with striking and surprisingly wearable pieces inspired by such elements as glorious sunsets, damp clothes, bold headlines, Boracay basics, window dressing and "men in Prozac."

By sticking to what he does best, Escario emerged as one of the evening's winners with a Red Carpet collection of billowy empire dresses made of Vietnamese silk and printed silk chiffon in

such dramatic shades as orange, teal and taupe.

Brumming with characteristic confidence, the designer claimed to have invented a new technique that fused the relaxed empire silhouette (in front) with the more form-fitting serpentine shape (on the back). The look, which stayed away from major beadwork, was decidedly "expensive and glamorous," said Escario.

Playing safe

On the opposite end of the fashion spectrum, Ocampo played it safe with an RTW collec-

tion consisting of earth-colored dresses made of cotton, linen and silk jersey.

To achieve an illusion of softness akin to clothes being hung out to dry, she incorporated an overlay of stretched tulle to a number of pieces. She also added a bit of ruching and woven embellishments in the form of belts with huge buckles to keep predictability at bay.

M. (short for Manuel) Mariano Martin and not Marjorie) Barretto also drew from his strength as one of P&H's in-house designers by producing handsome men's jackets and separates in soothing pastels and warm earth colors.

To break the monotony, he added a few floral shirts in neutral shades into the mix. The entire collection was reportedly inspired by "men in Prozac."

Fitting, however, was something Barretto needed to work on. Owing to a mix-up in the

show's sequence, he said, a number of male models ended up wearing clothes not meant for them. Well, perhaps next time.

At last, Mich Dulce has grown up! Months after her aborted stay at Big Brother's house, the designer came up with smart and edgy cotton and wool separates in plain, pinstriped and printed (as in newsprint) materials.

After earning a reputation as an avant-garde talent adept at cutting and fabric manipulation, Dulce kept on producing almost the same "unfinished" clothes year in and year out. Well, not anymore.

Dulce's trademark draping and tucking were still very much evident. So was her ingenious use of flaps and extensions in the form of huge swags of fabrics. This time, however, her clothes managed to look polished yet edgy, mature yet far from dowdy.

For some strange reason,

Regine Dulay's collection looked uncannily similar to Dulce's. It was unfortunate, however, that they came on the ramp one after the other as the former's pieces suffered in comparison to the latter's.

Surprises came early from curtain raiser Arles Lagbat, who came up with his version of the close-open collection.

In lieu of dramatic capes that opened up to reveal larger-than-life beadwork à la Pity Moreno, Lagbat created mini dresses with either bubble skirts or capeslets that could be turned into bags and what have you in the wink of an eye. That's what I call two looks for the price of one.

Davaoño designers Roleros and Aazas proved that their Manila- and Cebu-based colleagues don't hold a monopoly on creativity. They can probably even run circles around certain overrated non-talents.

Roleros (he of the terms made of dried water lilies fame) derived inspiration from Boracay to fashion ruched and skumpy beachwear in earthy shades. But the real attractions were his accessories, including a carry-on luggage on wheels, again made of dried and woven water lilies.

Aazas displayed his expertise at draping via several chiffon and jersey numbers in contrasting neutral colors. In keeping peripatetic with the sultry season, the collection was decidedly light and showed ample skin.

The entire show may not have shaken the local fashion scene to its foundations, but it was certainly a welcome respite from all the misplaced razzmatazz we had to endure from Genie Gopez and associates during the previous night.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



RAJO Laurel

TINA Danica

MICHEL SANTOS

Faux Luxe

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Chito Vecina

ORGANIZERS OF Philippine Fashion Week billed their recent evening event also at the NBC Tent as "Luxe Week." In truth, however, luxury was the last thing that came to my mind after going through the works of such names as Axel Bacudino, Eddie Castro and Protacio Empaces Jr.

Almost a decade after edgy club wear broke into the fashion scene, Bacudino was still hopelessly stuck on the underdressed and deconstructed look consisting of worn jeans, inverted flaps for track shorts-cum-

ask me how and why) and an iridescent corset.

You call these tattered and discolored pieces luxury couture? Come on, even the neighborhood ukay-ukay can probably offer much better finds.

Castro, on the other hand, fashioned a "kiddie" ensemble of poorly tailored cotton separates adorned either with unfinished patchworks or pastel-colored corsets and obis. This moribund, morose-looking look has no place even in the slums of Pleasantville.

Empaces offered a mixed bag of pretty dresses and badly con-



RAJO Laurel

ceptualized men's wear in the form of ill-fitting jackets paired with Bermuda shorts and capri pants. For some strange reason, two of his male models carried unlikely props such as a flimsy Philippine flag and an old-fashioned bayong. Sugod sa nearest exit!

Am I being a bit too literal? After all, the use of supposedly chic materials is no guarantee that one would live up to the show's title. Those who had the misfortune of enduring Tina Danica's atrocious wedding gowns should know.

Despite her use of such materi-

als, tulle, lace and beyond the realm of Bacudino-tacky, I can't be surprised if I were stood up by a designer on the big day. On proportions and detailing, Danica's work is simply defied.

Brothers Popoy Barba, were hampered by their decision to stick to the same old. What was the point of going up with variations of the same thing almost the materials and tech-

Surprise me

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Jim Guino Punzalan

"(NAME OF DESIGNER), IS that you?"

This is one of the more familiar whispered jokes you'd overhear when you're seated adjacent to writers at fashion shows. That's in reference, of course, to pieces sent on the runway that are oddly akin to a look already associated with some other designer.

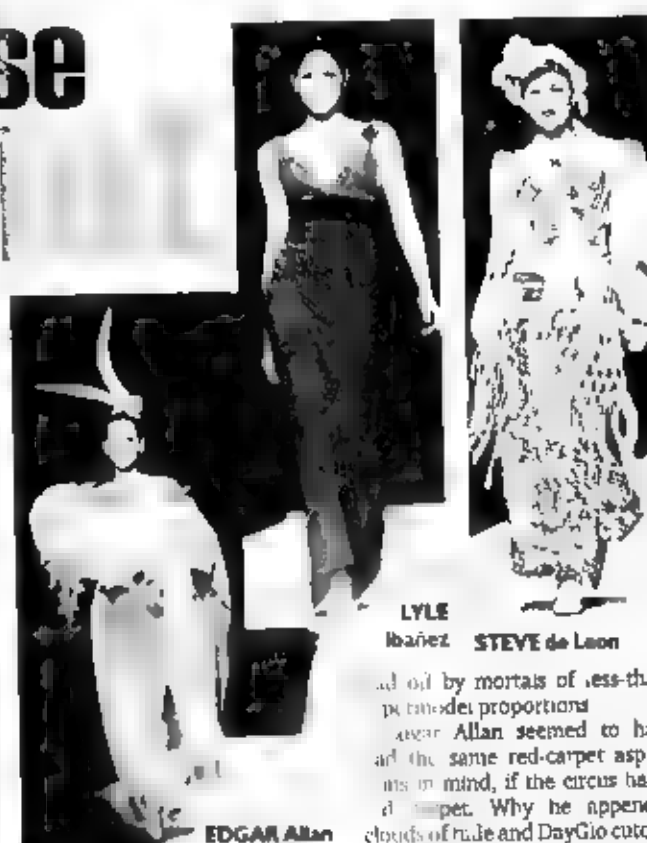
While it's all said in good fun, the implications can be far more complex than a lighthearted dig among scribes. It can mean the designer in the spotlight is a copycat, or the designer being copied isn't worth duplicating at all. It can also mean the designer being copied is stuck in one look, good or bad, complacent that his clients—the masses, the gingham, the madam, as an insider calls them—would buy anyway, so why reinvent the wheel? What do silly writers know?

Yes, what do silly writers know, except remember when the same design has been tirelessly shown over and over again, save for a different fabric here, a new button there. What do silly writers know but say their piece when a designer fails to evolve, either by commercial choice or by—let's say it—sheer lack of taste or talent? What do silly writers know but type away madly when a collection unfolds into a comical travesty on the runway.

Indignation

When these go to print, they are countered not with a better collection at the next show (which is our point, by the way), but by vexed indignation. It's cyclical and never ending. Though we like to be surprised.

At the Grand Allure Collection presented by Sony Handycam on the fifth day of the 2006 Philippine Fashion Week, Alex Bitong opened with fringed or tiered ruffled white dresses that were pretty if overwrought at times.



LYLE Ibáñez

STEVE de Leon

EDGAR Allan



ALEX Bitong

Barge Ramos presented several of his usual resort wear. But his piece de resistance was a lone simple black-and-white dress-cut not to close to the body, elegant yet easy even for slightly more robust frames.

Lytle Ibáñez had several sexy pieces—a long dress with the silhouette of a singlet, a sleek empire gown, a shorter piece with a deep neckline—though their slinky silhouettes may be hard to

adorn by mortals of less-than-perfect proportions. At least Allan seemed to have the same red-carpet aspirations in mind, if the circus had a dressmaker. Why he appended clouds of tulle and DayGlo cutouts into his gowns was beyond reason, except to create fluorescent distractions to the clothes' decidedly nite silhouettes.

The usually delightful Larry Espinoza had a slew of dresses that harked back to the Disco '70s. Not oddly enough, the clothes also seemed like costumes for the currently popular TV celebrity dance contests. Nholie Viñeza, meanwhile, dressed his models like harem concubines with belly-baring tops and lace panels for skirts. Strangely, we didn't spot Middle Eastern buyers in the audience.

Oliver Tientino went way over the top, draping layers upon multicolored layers of chiffon for skirts, beaded beaded bodices and disconcertingly askew wired jewel neckpieces. To top it off—he had extra fabric, so what!—he attached a large square of printed material at the back of each piece.

One designer refashioned a popular China-made junior into jackets for men and women's wrap top and pants. His bride wore an empire dress made of embroidered white fabric with scalloped edges. The fabric was actually a table linen in its previous life. Nenti!

Steve de Leon, was that you?

THE BEST AND THE WORST OF PHILIPPINE FASHION WEEK



PATTY Eustaquio



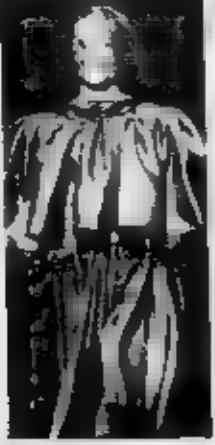
DONG Omega Diaz



FERDIE Abuel



YVONNE Quinsumbing-Romulo



JAMES Reyes



LOUIS Claparols



JOEY Samson

Overwrought but interesting

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Chito Vecina

THERE THEY WERE, A cocktail of pleats and folds, rucks or smooth seams, in subdued solids and nude tones, as if to mollify senses knotted frantic from that horrid squall of sequins, nauseating layers of tulle and chimp's potassium feast from the opening night of the Philippine Fashion Week 2006 four nights before.

If that were the intent, the 14 members of the Young Designers Guild who presented at the WeLa-sponsored Young Avant-Garde Collection succeeded to a good extent. Save for some rather safe (ergo, boring) and a few overwrought detailing—yes, too many fabric treatments in one dress, even sans gaudy beadwork, can be too much for the senses—the YDG's pocket collections were proof that, indeed, there is hope for Philippine fashion design.

Joey Samson is one of the few names who are steadily gaining respect for the craft, and it's a reputation that he doesn't seem to be taking lightly. First he sent a variation of men's deconstructed jackets with matching breeches or abbreviated pants. The charm of Samson's design is in the details, so that a pair of shorts is never just a pair of shorts—a front flap, for instance, is cut into overlap, to conceal the zipper.

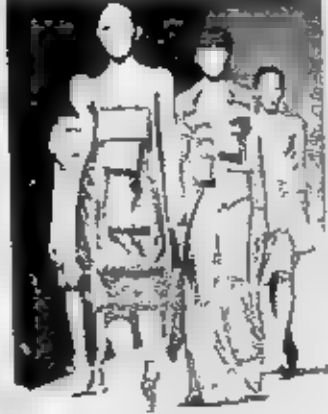
With an audience that was by majority on the lookout for women's clothes, it was refreshing that Samson's menswear collection



LZ Punzalan



JOHN Herrera



MEL Vergel de Dios

would receive perhaps the biggest applause of the evening—one that came after sending Joan Bitagcol in cummerbund and trousers, and Ria Bolivar in a belted mocha men's coat.

Spillovers

Like Samson, Yvonne Quinsumbing-Romulo also stuck to what she does best—cargo pants and beaded tops of re-sewn strips of silk, though the first two pieces of the latter seemed to be spillovers of her previous outings. She, however, sent interesting leather-paneled skirts.

Romulo's designs are reportedly among the bestsellers at Fibre boutique (which sells YDG's designs), second only to Ivarlusi Aseron (who didn't show at the PFW this year owing to his workload). And while we think she's sticking to a formula that spoke to her market, we had

hoped to see more than strips of leather and fastenings, in lieu of beads, to update her designs.

James Reyes, one of the more experimental young designers, seemed to have let his imagination run amuck with the doziest collection of the evening. His all-black collection spoke volumes—literally—with, say, a top made entirely of ruffles, sleeves that extended to the ankles, a floor-length shirtdress, cuffed long skirts, caped shirts.

There's no questioning Reyes' talent, though we wonder how this collection would sit with the market. It's true that his Japanese aren't for the faint-hearted, but this time it looked like he had gotten a tad too self-indulgent.

Brian Leyva, John Herrera and Louis Claparols came up with wearable, even pretty, pieces. It looked, however, that the three

The Young Designers Guild's pocket collections were proof that, indeed, there is hope for Philippine fashion design

fell prey to the same weakness—that is, jumping all they knew of fabric manipulation into some of their pieces. Nothing that some prudent editing can't fix, of course because this new breed evidently knows how to make clothes. It's subtly they need to work on.

In contrast, LZ Punzalan, Mitzi Quilendino, Rean Mata and newcomer Ferdie Abuel were a tad too safe, with the latter showing basic, if commercial, pieces—long-sleeved floral shirts and a playsuit, brown satin shorts and tops with ruffled necklines, and a plain shredded skirt. While Punzalan's three flowy gowns were his saving graces, Abuel could've done without his two Grecian gowns at the end, they were out of place.

All-white

The petite Patty Eustaquio has down pat women of her size with an all-white collection that either had her familiar short ruffled sleeves, showed hints of skin at the back, or short geometric dresses to show off Pilates-toned gains.

Dong Omega Diaz had cropped sailor jackets and bloomers for women, soft in cream and pale blue brocade, and matador capes and jackets for the men in the same material.



GETTING all glammed up by Lourd and Lou of Emphasis

Memoirs of a makeover

Text by Allison W. Lopez
Photos by Ryan Lim

WHAT WAS I THINKING? I asked myself not a few times at a special coverage for Fashion Week. The assignment: to write about me, myself, and my makeover for our "celebrity for a day" story.

As celebrities usually grace fashion shows and add their own glitter to the event, the INQUIRER Fashion team thought of trying to make one just for the Fashion Week gala.

And it's not your usual makeover. To add spice, they picked a writer to chronicle what it was like to be on the other side of the fence.

I became the guinea pig, a very nervous guinea pig.

Prima donna

Like a real prima donna, I arrived fashionably late for our 2 p.m. calltime at Emphasis Salon in Rockwell, Makati—though not on purpose as I had just come from my brother's graduation. After apologizing profusely to stylist Millet Arzaga, I was immediately shampooed and massaged so I could relax and take it easy. (I couldn't.)

A salon to the stars, Emphasis brimmed with society A-listers that Friday, including our very own Sea Princess Tessa Valdez, who teased me about my "date" Derek Ramsey.

I was only too happy to know that Lourd Ramos was doing my hair. (He's a pal; he's come familiar). He was young, sassy and savvy—just my type of stylist. He quickly asked what I'd be wearing, so I showed him the shredded Grecian-inspired black top by Rhett Sala. He immediately knew what kind of look I needed to match the fringed outfit.

Lourd decided to cut my hair because the layers were already out of shape. He assured me he'd maintain the length.

Now that my hair had more volume, Lourd passed me on to assistant JJ who put warm curlers on my head to create luscious waves. I had long wanted curls (that's why I was growing my hair long), and I was about to have it!

Makeup artist Lou Buntuy began prepping my face so she could apply the base. As I had prominent dark circles that time, she put quite a lot of concealer to cover the unsightly things. A good base, she said, is the most important thing in makeup to create a flawless look.

Using Body Shop's Spring/Summer makeup, Lou created smoky blue eyes and pale pink lips—perfect for the nighttime event at the Fort.

Afterward, Lourd and JJ unleashed the huge curls and tamed it with a Tigi spray that had a fruity scent. Yum! Lourd then made a half-ponytail for a less formal but still romantic look.

Prince Charming

Tall, dark and handsome Derek arrived and was prepped a bit for the shoot, while fairy



RHETT'S shredded top swished and swayed as I walked with handsome Derek. You should see him without this white Tyler polo in the TV series "Panday."

NOTHING but front-row seats at the Fashion Week gala for the "celebrity couple." Haha!

The assignment: to write about me, myself and my transformation into a fashion princess, complete with Derek Ramsey as a date

godmother Miller helped me get into my top. It looked great with slim Tyler pants, with the big ribbon on my back and the tassels cleverly covering my pison. Plus, it was my first time to wear "counure!"

Still, it took me a lot of guts to go out of the restroom looking so made up and totally unlike my tee-and-jeans self.

Then it was time for our "paparazzi" shots. It felt weird directing our photographer how to take pictures of us. Derek looked perfectly fine even with bystanders scooping us out on the bench, while I felt awkward. We chatted a bit about his Frisbee team, his role in "Panday" and his beer commercial with Kris Aquino while our very own paparazzo hounded us.

At 6, we slipped into Derek's classy Benz for the short ride to NBC Tent. The show was at 6:30, with the who's who of the Philippine fashion scene sure to be there. Gulp.

After raising eyebrows and piquing curiosities ("Who's that girl with Derek?" or more accurately, as reported to me by my godmoth-

ers, "Silu ba ni Derek?"), we watched the show with a great view from our front-row, near-the-ramp's-edge seats. Now that's privilege.

Comfort zone

Some people are meant to be in the limelight, while some are meant to report about the people in it. My shyness never really wore off, and I was only too glad to morph back into the real me soon after. But it's nice though to step out of your comfort zone once in a while and experience the trappings of being a celeb.

Treat yourself out for a day in the salon and get pampered all the way. Feel the beauty of a made-to-order outfit from our many talented designers. Look your best every day even when there are no paparazzi following you—because looking good does make you feel good.

And when your 15 minutes of fame does come, take it from Derek: Don't let it go to your head.



Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

WITHOUT A DOUBT, fashion designer Inno Sotto remains at the top of his game. But like many successful and prolific artists, he may slowly become a victim of his own success.

Sotto's reputation as a fashion designer in a lush and secluded Makati office, where he is often seen with a camera in hand, has made him a sought-after figure in the fashion world.

Although he has long been known for his elegant and sophisticated designs, his recent foray into the world of daywear cocktail dresses and huge gowns since he staged "Beloved" last year. The show had a long title—hold



Inno Sotto shows a

sleeveless shift and paneled dresses in

The
and
of it



under the Pink Sky of his recent collection. It had an equally long runway show, but he managed to end it on a high note.

He chose the hot month of April instead of cool January to stage his outdoor spectacle because of the erratic weather. Even then, Sotto

was still on tenterhooks as he began the show.

"There was no Plan B," he said. "I had to make the most of what I had."

In fairness to the designer, his show offered a refreshing mix of sleeveless shift and paneled dresses in cotton pique and raw silk. Apart

LACOSTE



from his trademark crocoders, Sotto also fashioned a number of separates consisting of short skirts and slim pants paired with bandeaus peeking out from open jackets.

The Manila Polo Club-meets-Amanpulo look was decidedly meant for the rich and the slim, as the voluminous gowns were meant for full-figured women.

"Since there was nothing to frame the pieces in an open-air venue," said Sotto, "I had to come up with much bigger clothes so they wouldn't look puny and pathetic."

No matter the dresses' form, however, one visual flourish constantly drew the audience's attention. Flowery cutouts made from the same material as the outfit and attached either to its back, sleeves, shoulders or chest.

After all these years, Sotto remains a master at investing a material as modest as pique with his own brand of magic. By tapping into his mastery of technique and tempering it with his characteristic restraint (a tough balancing act), he was able to turn such seemingly simple dresses into a striking and expensive-looking collection.

Sotto, who purposely shied away from using embroidery and beadwork, drew inspiration from the kiping (colorful and decorative rice wafers from Quezon) to arrive at such an embellishment.

Light
Eschewing beadwork wasn't so much an attempt to pander to the young, he insisted, but more a way of being more responsive to his clientele. In keeping with the sultry season, he purposely kept his collection, including his formal, empire-waisted gowns made from layers of damask, organdy, organza and lace, light.

Since there was only one rule, however, didn't apply to his guests. But knowing how Filipinos don't know how to dress down, Sotto might have a point in insisting that everybody dress to the nines.

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BEAUTY



HAIR TRENDS



SUN IN A BOX



PRODUCT BAZAAR

P. 33

Atty. Albert B. Arcilla: feeling safe with Gold in his pocket



He has yet to spend all 365 days of one year in the country. His job would fly him out at least four times a year. Likewise, personal journeys would land him in shores beyond ours.

As president of Viking Cars Philippines, the local distributor of Volvo, Atty. Albert B. Arcilla needs to travel frequently to the car company's mother hub in Sweden. At

certain times, Atty. Arcilla would be required to visit Volvo's other offices in Germany, Switzerland and France. On the other hand, destinations such as the US and Canada and various Asian cities are reserved for personal visits.

In all his trips, his credit cards have become travel essentials, providing him with much-needed convenience. But in some of his past journeys, these same cards became sources of what all cardholders fear the most: fraudulent transactions.

It was in his personal travels that Atty. Arcilla had fallen victim to credit card con twice. Upon his arrival from Hong

Kong, his local card company informed him that his card number was used to purchase a top-of-the-range sound system from a store in the crown colony. Then, during a stay in Tokyo, another card of his was used to make luxury purchases from a store he never shopped in.

To a frequent traveler like Atty. Arcilla, the possibility of identity theft can be very unsettling. And to this very day, it still exists and remains widespread, especially in Europe which to someone like Atty. Arcilla is a mandated destination.

It was therefore a tremendous relief when Atty. Arcilla found out that BPI Gold MasterCard has come out with the PaySafe System. It is the country's first EMV-compliant chip card that provides the

cardholder superior security against fraudulent card transactions.

"This new facility is an expected service from a bank like BPI," says Atty. Arcilla. A BPI cardholder long before the launch of BPI Gold MasterCard's PaySafe System, Atty. Arcilla has always known BPI as an institution with an unbroken history of trust and trailblazing services. Even before the arrival of the chip card, Atty. Arcilla's relationship with his BPI card was never marred by any fraudulent incidences. But the new chip technology reinforces the trust that Atty. Arcilla has long called the "silent benefit" of any BPI credit card. He says, "With my BPI Gold MasterCard, I know I have something in my wallet that I can trust to protect me wherever I go."

His great satisfaction as a BPI Gold MasterCard cardholder goes beyond the anti-fraud protection he receives from the card's new facility. He is also very much pleased with his card's other features. BPI credit cards' wide acceptance abroad is one feature from where he derives much convenience as a world traveler.

A card as valuable as BPI Gold MasterCard exists not to put its cardholder at risk. It exists to provide its holder utmost convenience and protection. But to Atty. Albert B. Arcilla, a certified world traveler, this is a fact he has experienced for so long. And his solid relationship with the bank was perfectly articulated in this line he stated in conclusion, "I have always counted on BPI to keep me safe."

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WORLD FUSION

Ethnic-flavored and cosmopolitan, the style is characterized by cultural hybrids. It ties together styles from around the globe. The cuts go from short to long. They may be outrageous but structured with lots of volume-curls, with a distinct fringe section. Its colors include bright blonde, matte or extremely light tones, salt-and-pepper, black with shades of red, and black with indigo or blue as accent.



REAL DAYDREAM

The look consists of whimsical, magical, even dreamlike styles. Blossoms and trinkets are incorporated into strands of hair. Done in radiant shades, cuts go from short to long, curly, straight, or layered, with soft flowing movements. Colors include copper, cinnamon brown, chocolate brown, cashmere, hazelnut, caramel, raspberry, soft pink, lilac and sun-kissed blonde.



TECHNO NATURE

This trend is characterized by cool shades of blonde to medium brown, including pastel, pearl-like, and tone-on-tone elemental shades like sky blue, ocean blue and moss green. Techno Nature consists of streamlined and geometric haircuts, but with natural lines that are soft, light and feathery. The style consists of simple wash-and-wear hairdos specifically designed for busy people.



GOTHIC LUXURY

A contrast of light and darkness, cuts can go from short to long, accented by expressive elements. High drama is brought about round, sleek, wavy and heavy one-length cuts. Colors include cool blonde, warm golden blonde and black, with dark violet or red wine shades. Dark red, plum, black and white locks are accented with pearl, diamond and silver embellishments.

Classy cuts, edgy colors

The predominant hues for Weira's Trend Vision 2006 are violets and pinks, in varying degrees of intensity

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

A NICE HAIRCUT ALONE just doesn't cut it anymore, if British master stylist Beverly C is to be believed.

"At Essensuals, we don't see color as a separate service. Cut and color go to-

gether," said the new international, creative director of the British chain of salons.

Beverly C and her creative and technical team were in Manila recently to present Weira's Trend Vision 2006. One of the most respected names in the hairstyling industry, she was twice named British Hairstylist of the Year, and twice London Hairdresser of the Year.

Beverly C was recently tapped by Toni

& Guy/Essensuals founder Toni Mascolo to head the company's stylish yet "accessible" salon group Essensuals. (Toni & Guy salons are more trend-setting and revolutionary.) Essensuals has 70 salons worldwide.

The predominant colors for 2006, according to the stylist and her team, will be violets and pinks, in varying degrees of intensity.

For the trend called "Techno Nature,"

Cherry Reyes, creative director of Essensuals (Toni & Guy in the Philippines) created a curved cut that softly framed the model's face. She applied pale, almost icy-blue violet color near the tips with thin slivers of the same shade on the front.

"Techno Nature," explained Beverly C, mixes the strong look of steel structures with blunt, graphic lines and the soft, curved shapes of nature.



BEVERLY C shows the "Gothic Luxury" cut.



"REAL Daydream"



"TECHNO Nature" by Cherry Reyes



A VARIATION of "Techno Nature"



"WORLD Fusion"

The more romantic "Real Daydream" has long hair—wavy or straight—in mind. "I don't believe in [creating a cut] that doesn't work on somebody," the stylist noted. Ergo, she kept the layered length of the model's hair, but created a slight asymmetry on the front to give the cut character.

Red is the color for this romantic look. "Red is big in Europe," Beverly C noted. "It's back in a massive way." Soft to rich reds are used to create a multi-tonal feeling.

For the benefit of local stylists, the team also showed some experimental looks for editorial purposes, coiling pre-colored human hair into phone-wire-like cables, in the "World Fusion" trend.

"Gothic Luxury" is a throwback to the '60s, with bluntly cut sections and sharp angles, and soft fringes that veil the face. "The cut should have a focal point but still look beautiful," Beverly C stressed. Purple tones, she added, are set off by Goth-black hair. The look works best with Asian hair.

Get that gorgeous tan

A S IF WE GIRLS DIDN'T have enough beauty concerns, summer adds yet another set of beauty rituals and musts. I should know. I literally got burnt!

I was getting my usual mani-ped when I decided to throw in a threading session for my face. Unfortunately I was informed that threading was unavailable in the particular place I was in. Instead, I decided to give waxing a try.

Major boo-boo on my part. A few minutes after waxing was done, my upper lip was red and really itchy. For a few days, my friends were even calling me Hitler due to the red mustache-like streaks on my upper lip. I was scared it would be a permanent scar. Luckily Terracotta healed it.

Every summer a girl has to go through extra lengths to look good. The beach is no place for unwanted hair, so a lot of women go through hair removal procedures. Not to forget mani-ped, and getting some color.

What, I wept through, validates the fact

that it's better to be careful, with the procedures you pick and to stick to what is less dangerous. From now on, I will stick to threading instead of waxing in areas where there is a choice.

Even when getting a tan, always make sure SPF is at hand.

My friend gets herself spray-tanned in Emphasis and she looks really good after. Minus the sun damage!

Since getting a fake tan is pretty expensive, I was so happy to attend the recent presscon of Guerlain Aftercare. Study of the tanning process in women with different types of complexion, Guerlain has created new classics that capture the effect of exposure to early summer sun.

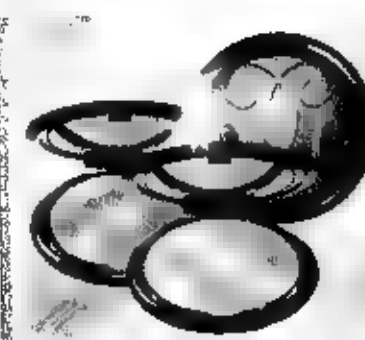
Terracotta Light Sheer Bronzing Powder. This compact comes in two sets of graduated, coordinated colors with both matte and pearly effects. For the first time, all women with dark and fair complexions will be able to achieve a natural glow.

Terracotta Gloss and Shine Moisturizing Balm Sun Shimmer moisturizes the lips so that it lights up the entire face.

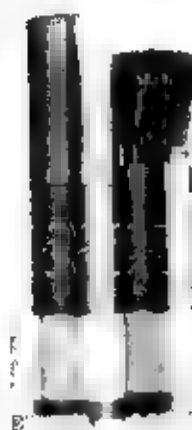
KNOCKOUT!



Ria Francisco-Prieto



TERRACOTTA Light Sheer Bronzing Powder



TERRACOTTA Pearly Brush Sublime Shimmering Powder

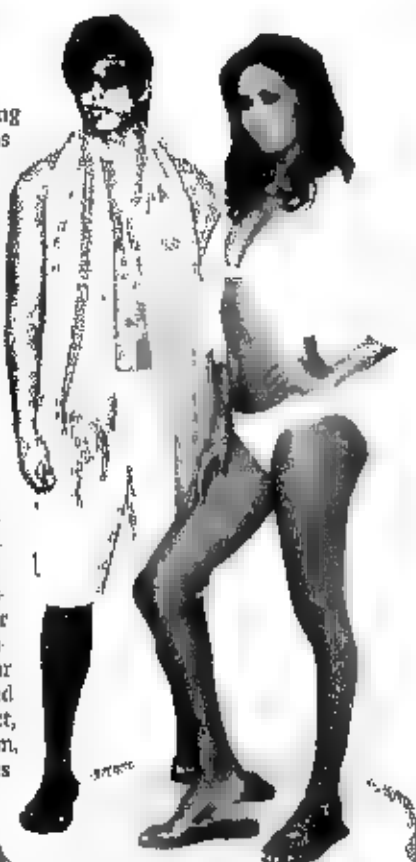
Terracotta Teint Dore Moisturizing Bronzing Spray gives an instant tan, as light or as dark as you desire.

Terracotta Pearly Brush Sublime Shimmering Powder. This pearly powder, incorporated into a brush, is designed to enhance a gorgeous tan.

Terracotta Light Sheer Bronzing Powder (P2,550). Whether you're fair or dark, you'll love this sun-kissed new powder, ideal for all skin types. A perfect complement to Guerlain's legendary Moisturizing Bronzing Powder, this ingenious mosaic of five shades of compact powder, including a complexion high-lighter, can be used to create and add just a natural-looking glow.

Terracotta Gloss and Shine Moisturizing Balm Sun Shimmer (P1,298). The radiant glow of Terracotta Gloss and Shine intensifies your tan and makes it sparkle. Enriched with mango butter and cotton extract, this gloss melts deliciously, like a balm, without the sticky feeling. It leaves skin soft, supple, comfortable and moisturized.

Terracotta Pearly Brush Sublime Shimmering Powder (limited edition, P2,698). This lightweight loose powder incor-



MODELS all bronzed up by Guerlain

Most Holy Week Skincare and Beauty Products

THE HOLY WEEK IS supposed to be a time for reflection and prayer. That shouldn't cost a lot, but everyone goes out of town and we all know how that racks up quite a bill. My aim in this column is to look for great bargains and special sales after the cost-heavy Holy Week.

Have you visited Es-sences lately? Those of you who love products that have an aromatherapy feel to them should definitely pass by the EOcitane counter. It has great two-in-one packages that are buy-one, take-one or hugely discounted. I could not believe my luck as several of my favorite items were paired up. It was not the usual crappy extra item added to the package. The package in fact combined customer favorites.

My head spun as I made a grab for a pack of spicy orange candles that wake me up on lazy days and eliminate bad odors from the kitchen or bathroom long after the candle is extinguished. I also grabbed the almond shaping gel that checks cellulite.

Desirable pair-ups are the almond shaping gel and almond candle, as well as blossom dew fragrance and shower oil. The scent is the only sweet scent that can be worn in the summertime as it smells clean and yummy at the same time. The body oil is a bestseller as it exfoliates, moisturizes, cleanses and leaves the yummiest-smelling fragrance.

Green Tea lovers would be glad to know that it has included its fragrance and candles in one package.

EOcitane items are not cheap, but those of you who have been lusting after the products can get the chance to stretch your budget and hoard the items you love. Offer good till supplies last.

Apivita, a Greek beauty and body line, has super bath and body products that are a lot cheaper than EOcitane's but smell just as great. It has its own buy-one, take-one packages. They may be good Mother's Day gifts.

Apivita has three main aromatherapy body lines, and I have them all! They suit women's ever-changing moods. Picking a favorite is tough for me.

The Harmony line smells fresh and clean with green tea, bergamot and sea weed. It mixes well with perspiration, making me smell eternally fresh.

The Energy line—ginger, lime and green tea—is a spicy citrus scent and seems the best seller. The Euphoria line is a milk lover's dream with white chocolate, vanilla and white tea—a scent I associate with babies and

a happy childhood.

My packages have a gentle body scrub, milk bath, body milk and shampoo all in the same scent family, so I literally smell the same from head to toe the whole day.

Soaps

For the hot summer weather, I love using soaps because they keep odor-causing body oils away longer. Not just any soap will do for me, though. I want those with skin-exfoliating and -lightening properties to ensure even skin tone all over.

I have discovered two reasonably priced soaps from the grocery. The Garden Secret Papaya soap (P35) is available in most groceries except SM. It has two variants, orange and green. What makes this different from other papaya soaps is the presence of two ac-



HYPER whitening lotion

tive ingredients found in the famed Magic Cream.

The other brand that also whitens and rejuvenates is Hype duo green papaya and vitamin C soap (P59.75). It has a matching lotion at P119.75 that is non-greasy and works for me.

Most papaya soaps just exfoliate skin. Hype has skin-brightening agents and does not dry the skin. It makes your skin tone even, and the lightest you will go is baby light.

Garden Secret Papaya and Hype are cheap enough for me to justify and pair up with my Belo body whitening cream that costs P10,000/1 kg (VAT not included), which I use only at night.

Other whitening lotions in the grocery are Godiva licorice lotion (P120) and Nivea Night Body lotion. They do not work as fast as Belo's and yield less dramatic results, but they do work and are a lot cheaper.

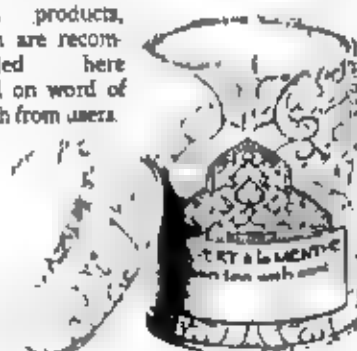
I suggest you apply these grocery brands morning and night after every shower. Top it

off with sunblock during the day.

Nivea has a day-whitening lotion with SPF 30.

You may also try EOrea: White Perfect triple whitening body lotion with SPF 18 (P850) which exfoliates, whitens and protects.

The author has tried every product above except for the Nivea products, which are recommended here based on word of mouth from users.



L'OCCITANE Green Tea with mint candle

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas



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- Banked Town Center, Cebu
- Eastwood City, Liba
- Good Earth Plaza, Avenida
- Susano Complex, Noveliches
- Berkeley Square, Commonwealth
- Nagaland, E-mail, Naga City

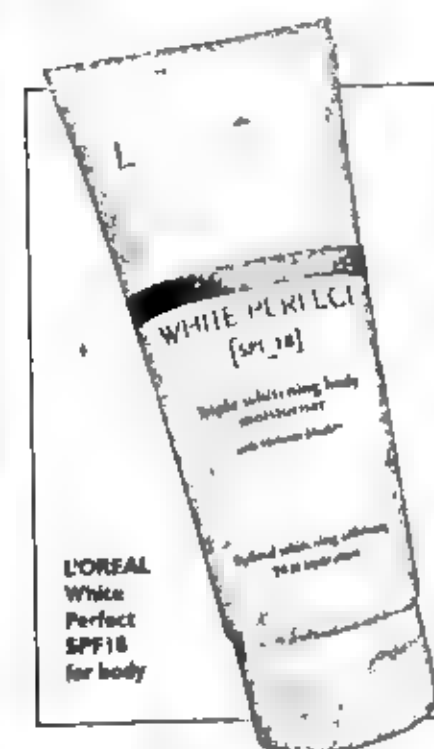
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0434, Series of 2006



GARDEN Secrets Papaya soap



EUPHORIA body scrub



L'OREAL White Perfect SPF18 for body

Get that gorgeous tan

From page D2

porated into a brush is intended to illuminate the face and body with pearly radiance. Shimmering with metallic reflections, it highlights

bronzed skin for hours to make you look like a summer goddess.

Terracotta Loose Powder Kohl-Brun Dore 02 (P1,698). This enigmatic and flattering shade allows every woman to have more alluring and enticing eyes.

Terracotta Teint Dore, Moisturizing

Spray for the body (P2,150). This is a gentle gel-cream which sprays effortlessly all over the body. The subtle makeup perfectly imitates the natural glow of a tan. Moisturizing, ultra-comfortable and long-lasting, it melts into the skin, spreads easily and dries instantly without staining clothing. Its caramel tone

can be layered in order to suit absolutely any complexion and the results are perfectly natural.

I tried the products and I am very happy with it. To think that I am really pale. Guerlain gives me a glow that actually makes me look like I got a little sun. I suggest going to Rustan's and sampling these new summer products. You don't have to get the complete line. Just pick what suits your lifestyle. I'm sure you will fall in love with at least one!

Visit the new Guerlain counters, now open at Rustan's Shangri-la Tower and Rustan's Makati.

Oishi Recipe to Chill Sundays water + ice!

About P3.60 per popsicle

SUNDAYS JELLY MANGO POPSICLES

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 litre pack of Sundays Mango
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1 (3 oz.) pkg. unflavored gelatin
- 1/2 cup cold water

PROCEDURE:

Dissolve unflavored gelatin, Sundays Mango in the boiling water. Add the cold water and stir well. Pour into popsicle molds or ice cube trays. Freeze partially, add sticks and freeze until firm, about 2 to 3 hours. Makes about 1 dozen.

For more great ways to chill this summer look for the Oishi Sundays + Suntea Trial Pack in leading supermarkets.

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Stay away from perfume or anything heavy-scented, because the heat will intensify the scent. Stick to a light fragrance or baby cologne. —*Mia Faust-Cruz, Seventeen magazine EIC*



Exercise is key to good health and glowing skin. Start the day by going to the gym to do cardio and lift weights. Plus, drink lots of water. —*Patty Belita, personality development enhancer and modeling coach*



Put a lot of SPF on your face and be diligent in moisturizing. Also, look for a good eye cream and remember that it is different from your facial moisturizer. —*Chessa Garcia, actress*



I like bright popsicle-pink polish on my toes during wanda season. It goes with anything you wear! —*Jenne Sison, Cosmopolitan magazine EIC*



Dry hair is unattractive. Keep a leave-in conditioner in your bag to nourish hair when needed. —*Kelly Misa, model*



A pair of shades or a cap is a good way of protecting yourself from the heat while looking pretty fashionable. —*Joanne Tengen, businesswoman*



To stay fit and trim during bikini season, find ways to exercise no matter how busy you are. Walk your dog around the block or take the stairs instead of the elevator. —*Peaches Abern, courtisane reporter*



Summer is the time I get active and join as many badminton tournaments as I can. The workout keeps me stress-free and well-balanced. Aside from keeping ourselves well hydrated, it's also best to maintain a good disposition. —*Gem Padilla, thespian*



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LIFESTYLE

The lightness
of wearing

WEAR SOMETHING EASY, something light and something white that "breathes" this season as you temporarily leave the urban jungle and head for clear blue waters, velvety white sands and light ocean breeze.

In her latest collection of banana wraps, Dita Sandico-Ong gives the pieces a new shape that is organic, chic and ultra-modern. The fabric's ability to breathe, a quality for which it is known, is retained.

The "lukot" wrap comes in pearl, cream and ecru and is accented with pale silver and gold threads that add subtle sheen to the weave.

An ideal summer accessory, it can go casual as beach cover-up for a bikini, or formal, draped over an Irish linen gown. Creating the desired effect of easy elegance is effortless.

The designer's latest collection may be viewed at her shop at 35 Wilson St., Greenhills and at Rustan's Makati and Rustan's Shangri-La Tower. Call 7267260 or 7265102.

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Clarizza King, Model

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SOME of the 2,000 delegates who attended the acquaintance cocktail party at the sprawling garden of Barcelona's Rey Juan Carlos Hotel

Enjoying the skin trade in Barcelona

FASTER THAN YOU could bat an eyelash, I accepted the invitation of Rustan's Essences to Barcelona for a meeting with Dermalogica's hotshot founder and top skincare therapists.

After a smooth, absolutely enjoyable flight on KLM's state-of-the-art aircraft, the Boeing 777, and a two-hour stop at Amsterdam's fab Schiphol airport, we arrived at one of my favorite cities in Spain: bustling Barcelona.

Ahhh, the awesome La Sagrada Família by Gaudí, the Casa Milà, the famous La Boqueria market—all this, plus more, are synonymous to the captivating, exciting city of Barcelona, palangas. It is where the renowned Dermalogica hosted the large gathering of more than, take note, 2,000 skincare therapists from 40 countries.

The Philippine group was represented by the Dermalogica rah-rah team of Rustan's Commercial Corp., headed by brilliant Rhoda Campos, the hotshot VP for cosmetic and toiletries, Riza Torres, AVP for B2B Distribution, Carmela Vedar, business development manager for Dermalogica, model Rissa Mananquil Samson, who made heads turn wherever she went, and I, and you its truly, hatch!

The congress kicked off with a fantastic welcome cocktail reception at the Rey Juan Carlos Hotel's cool sprawling garden, where Dermalogica representatives from key cities of the world rubbed shoulders.

The next morning, bright and not so early (thank goodness), we were all whisked off to the Palau De Congressos de Catalunya, where Jane Wurwand, the brilliant founder of Dermalogica and the International Dermal Institute, spearheaded the list of super guest speakers and discussed "what today's women and men want."

The different sessions tackled common anxieties of female and male customers—with the most popular concern being their passion for results (money is not a question).

Super-interesting topics included the latest medical trends, the emerging male market, and identifying new clients by observing their behavior.

There were inspirational talks on the world as a "touch-starved" society, and how the skincare industry can "uplift lives through emotional and physical healing." After two hours of lectures, it

**WITHOUT
BATTING
AN EYELASH**

**Maurice
Arcache**

Photos by Alex Van Hagen
using Kodak EasyShare



was break time for tea and cookies. During this recess, we mingled with different delegates from many countries. And the non-speaking English delegates were so impressed that the Filipino gang could speak perfect English. Rhoda C. and I conversed with some of the Spanish-speaking delegates from South America.

Anyway, after more interesting lectures from well-known personalities and a fab dinner, I was all ears to the lecture of the International Spa Association, which identified three main client profiles. Okay, here it goes:

First is the gateway (or entry level)—they are the clients who form the bulk of the population. They are new to professional skincare and are not very skin-savvy. They usually only receive manicures, pedicures or massages. So they walk into the salon and they want treatments that affect appearance; they want to feel special, pampered and beautiful.

Then comes the mid-level (or escape) clients, who ask, "What will this do for me?" This is the most neglected group. They understand the importance of professional skincare but still visit a skincare center only four to six times a year.

Next comes the mid-level clients, who already understand the basics, so good skin therapists, like those found at any Dermalogica salon, must always "expand their clients' regimens by recommending more advanced

products."

And last, there are the "hard core clients." They are interested in the body as well as in the face. They are not at all price-sensitive. They are spa connoisseurs, visiting three to four times a year for well-being. They are the smallest segment of the market, the hardest to please, and the highest per-capita spending on professional products and services.

Another tres interesting topic was about the new spirit of beauty and the comfort craze. "Consumers are craving a retreat from aggression, looking for escape and ways to comfort themselves," said Rita Sylvan of the Canada.

And check this out: palangas many cosmetic companies are now launching products to calm down your skin. There is this wave of skincare products that will not only make your skin feel calm superficially, but, would you believe, also deliver Prozac-like tranquilizers to the body, integrating vitamins and minerals in creams, lotions, and even skin patches, so as to deliver medicinal benefits to the skin.

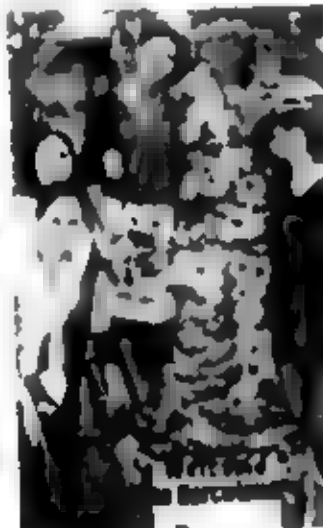
The new trend is reflected in Dermalogica's latest Daily Resurfacer, which has revolutionized the industry's approach to exfoliation. Although particularly effective for the treatment of photo-damaged, acneic and maturing skin, the Resurfacer is suitable for all skin conditions and is designed for clients wishing to have smoother, healthier looking skin, palangas.

"The humanist consumer is the consumer of the future. She or he is hyper knowledgeable and multifaceted. They read labels and want to know where ingredients come from," said Sullivan.

The bottom line, palangas, is beauty is both for the body and the soul. Total beauty is beauty that feels good, looks good and does good. With 20 years behind it, Dermalogica proves this, palangas.

Afterwards, it was time to rock and roll, a night Medeva case.

Hey, dah lings, make that must-do appointment at the Dermalogica center located at Essences Aesthetics, 5/F, Rustan's Makati, Essences in Rustan's Alabang Town Center Urban Spa, Shangri-La Mall, Fitness First in RBC Plaza, Serenity Spa in Cebu, and Skin Zone in Chimes Mall, Davao.



OUR gang with one of the statues in famous La Rambla, Barcelona



RIZA Torres, AVP-B2B distributions, Rustan's Commercial Corp.; Carmela Vedar, business development manager for Dermalogica; good-looking Stuart Lertch, marketing manager of Dermalogica International; and Rhoda Campos, vice president of RCC



WOMEN power: Diana Howard, VP of technical development, and Jane Wurwand, founder of Dermalogica and International Dermal Institute



A MANAGER of one of Dermalogica's clinics explains the importance of touch in applying Dermalogica's skincare products.



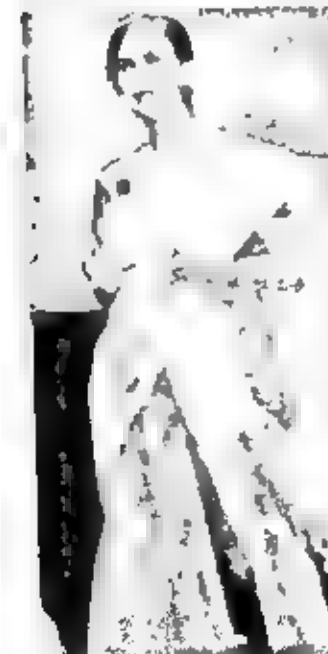
ONE of Dermalogica's top facial care experts explains to a Swedish delegate the right application of Dermalogica's skincare products.



DERMALOGICA'S First Lady, Jane Wurwand, poses with some of our delegates from Vietnam.



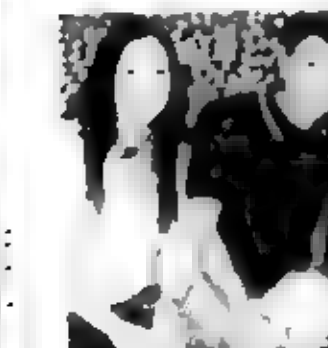
ATTRACTIVE Emma Hobson, Dermalogica's education manager for Asia, Australia and New Zealand



SHARON Williamson, education manager for Europe, Middle East and Africa, talked about beautiful Indian techniques used in Dermalogica clinics around the world.



IVOR Gordon of Dermalogica



THE GANG OF FIVE: Chilling after the Dermalogica three-day conference at the fab five-star Hotel Art of Barcelona: Carmela Vedar, me, Riza Mananquil Samson, Riza Torres and Rhoda Campos



NARENDRA Mehta, developer of the famous "Champhaga," demonstrates the massage technique on a delegate from South Africa.



RETRO IN THE SUN
Gucci's vintage-inspired shades with gold-plated highlights on the nose bridge, endpiece and temple.



THE EAGLE has landed—on the temples of these shades from Emporio Armani.

THE LATEST EYEWEAR FROM THE ITALIAN style houses of Gucci and Armani hark back to glam, from Steve McQueen to Jackie O, from stylized logos to generous dimensions.

Gucci drew inspiration from its own archives for its new designs. Take the "buckle motif," which was used in the '70s, mostly on jewelry, gifts and shoes. Now, a stylish metal buckle engraved with the Gucci logo makes a comeback on the sunglasses' temples.

This revamped buckle detail is also to be found in Gucci boutiques, making an appearance on leather goods and accessories.

Another icon from Gucci's stylish heritage is the horsebit hinge—a tribute to the company's beginnings as a manufacturer of saddles, saddlery products and luggage. Again, the horsebit icon appears on the eyewear temples, with a more glamorous version embellished with Swarovski crystals.

Another take on the horsebit is found in the textured horsebit icon, repeated endlessly on the materials used for bags and the like. This new motif is layered on the acetate temples of sunglasses to exact precision. The horsebit texture style comes in two rich-looking modes.

For pure retro, Gucci's Vintage style stages its own comeback. This comes with gold-plated highlights on the nose bridge, endpiece and hinge, complete with toric lenses in different shades and tints.

The Aviator is a trendy, masculine concept with fashionable styling in light hues and graded lenses. The ever-famous and much-copied Gucci monogram is celebrated on the Avian models of certain eyewear.

For Giorgio Armani, the handy days of

Steve McQueen and Jackie O serve as inspiration. The men's collection, for example, features a modern take on the actual pair that McQueen wore. A generously proportioned pair is red up with a metal plaque inscribed with "Giorgio Armani" at the temple end of the arm, and the "GA" logo on the terminals.

On the women's eyewear the GA monogram logo is placed strategically. Plain or studded with Swarovski diamante, the pairs come in intense colors ranging from pink to brown, white to gray, silver to black.

Emporio Armani, meanwhile, offers young and dynamic shades. Again, the logo is a major part of the design. The eagle is prominent in some pairs, while the new EA logo also makes its appearance, as it does on other Emporio Armani accessories.

The classic but reinterpreted aviator design is the key look for the men, while girls can revel in almost flat rectangular metal shapes. Colors are straight from the makeup box: sky blue frames with grey sky-blue lenses, white with smoky grey lenses, ruthenium with emerald green.

To be sure that the Gucci and Armani eyewear you are purchasing are from a legitimate source, always look for the Safilo hologram tag attached to the side of the eyewear. This tag is an assurance that the eyewear you have purchased is made by Safilo Group of Italy, the official manufacturer.

Gucci, Emporio Armani, and Giorgio Armani Eyewear are distributed exclusively by Newtrends International Corp. and are available in leading optica shops and stores.

Dog's Bestfriend



THE DISCREET GA logo behind the shield lens gives a touch of subtle elegance to these Giorgio Armani shades.



WELL-ROUNDED: Jackie O-style oversized round lenses from Giorgio Armani and the EA round logo on the temples from Emporio Armani.



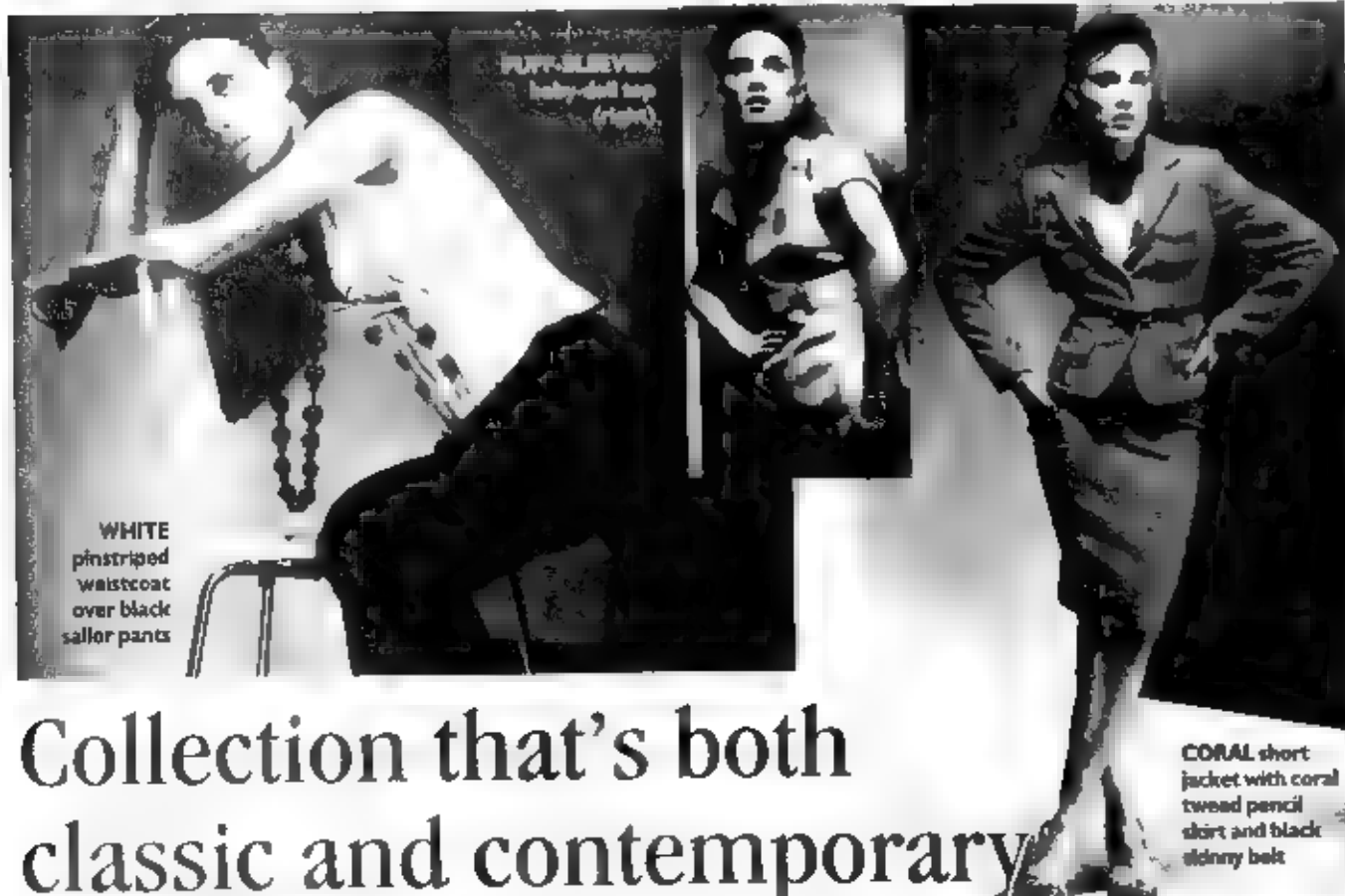
The heat is on

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SWATCH
seasider

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF PARTICIPATING OUTLETS



Collection that's both classic and contemporary



WHITE eyelet shirt dress over maxi skirt with leather plait waistbelt

WALLIS' SPRING-SUMMER COLLECTION 2006 features classic and contemporary styles using stripes and polka dots and some Latin influences.

The collection is characterized by vibrant colors and interesting textures and embellishments. Inspired by stylish Deauville in France, top picks are cropped trousers with big buttons and navy culottes paired with a striped sweater for daytime wear and polka-dot chiffon blouse or fitted striped waistcoat for evening.

The Carnival collection, influenced by 1920s Buenos Aires, include dressy summer pieces like skirts, dresses and blouses with ruffles. Broderie is a flirty Cornell dress with a Hessian woven belt or dramatic jewelry. Black is enhanced with strong tones of emerald, berry, white and vermilion. A slender fit is achieved by cutting close to the body.

Summer Couture's key pieces hark back to the 1960s with chiffon blouses with balloon sleeves paired with pencil skirts, figure-flattering culip skirt with ribbon bow belt or shell top.

Fabrics are in shades of silver, charcoal white, mustard and mocha. Pleated chiffon dress, crushed satin origami dress and organza two-piece are some of the pieces in the collection.

Accessories include metallic beaded purses, leather sash belts and embroidered evening bags. Wallis carries everything from beaded belts to camisoles to achieve whatever look you may want.



CREAM eyelet blouse over pencil skirt with plait waistbelt

A selection of this collection will also be available in petite sizes for women 5'3" and under.

Robinsons Specialty Stores Inc. (RSSI) is the exclusive franchisee in the Philippines of Wallis, the biggest women's fashion brand currently under the Arcadia Group Plc, the largest clothing retailer in the United Kingdom.

Wallis is at 3/F Indulgences Wing, Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Visit www.wallis-fashion.co.uk



WHITE spotted dress

WELCOME SUMMER with Dorothy Perkins' 2006 collection in a variety of styles—from '40s and '50s chic to fashion staples like stripes and polka dots.

Fresh and nautical-inspired casual wear come by way of striped swimwear, dresses and tops as well as pieces in blue, red and white.

For a more feminine look, the collection offers millonard blouses and petticoat dresses in soft cotton, crinole fabrics and faded florals, with broderie anglaise, lace, cutwork and pearl buttons.

Dorothy Perkins also presents a return to 1940s fashion. Utilitarian military shapes are updated with Oriental styling. For that comfy-summery look, tea dresses are flattering in pretty patterns. Roll-hem cargo shorts, perfectly matched with coral printed blouses and platform heels are idea combinations for a unique twist on G.I. chic.

There are also '50s-style fitted dresses and cropped jackets with bold flashes of ruby, emerald and navy in accessories and prints. Polka dots and fine stripes are seen on chiffon capped-sleeve blouses, fine knit cardigans and on full-skirt dresses with flirty full helms.

Dorothy Perkins, which has 570 stores in Great Britain and 45 outlets worldwide, is distributed in the Philippines through a partnership between Robinsons Specialty Stores Inc. (RSSI) and Arcadia Group of the United Kingdom. Stores are in Robinsons Galleria, Power Plant Mall and The Podium.



GI hat, black satin tie, black chiffon blouse and cream pencil skirt



BLACK fitted dress and green bow bag

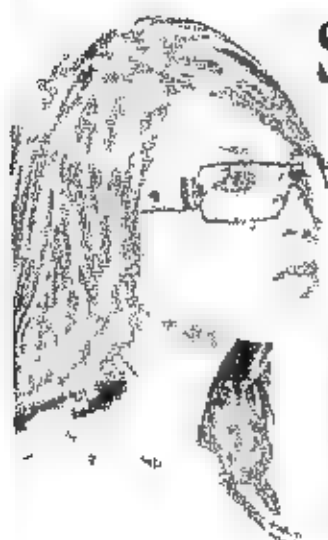


WHITE cropped jacket, navy-and-lime striped vest and navy striped slouch trousers



CREAM peasant top and denim shorts

Sleek, confident shades



PACIFIC Shades with fancy markings on the temple

A DIFFERENT JUDY ANNE SANTOS is shown in the latest advertising materials of Pacific Blue Shades. You will see a more inspired, confident and sophisticated Judy Anne Santos. And why not, when the photographs were taken by Ryan Agoncillo himself, her fiancé?

The 2006 collection offers models in large and close-fitting masks with a prevalence of dark tones such as gloss black and dark brown. Retro-style aviators in metals with big sizes, as well as basic styles such as the rimless and sexiness in normal sizes complete the line.

Pacific Blue Shades was awarded Eyewear of the Year 2005 by the Philippine Fashion Awards. The 2006 Collection is now available in all Shoe Mart department stores nationwide.



SOLID-WHITE worn on the head is the fashion trend set by Pacific Blue. After this billboard came out on Edsa, more women were seen sporting the look.

Art and color in sports fashion

THE ITALIAN BRAND FILA PAID TRIBUTE to the sports lifestyle during the Fila Polo Cup 2006 at the Manila Polo Club.

A fashion show featured Fila's new L'arte Nello Sport Spring-Summer Collection. There were performances by the Asthanga Yoga and the Fila Polo Cup '06. The Polo Cup winners were recognized.

The new collection is characterized by comfortable and colorful athletic gear for golf, tennis and other sports. Its inspiration is "art in sports."

Up to April 30, Fila outlets offer the new collection and other lines at special prices and discounts.



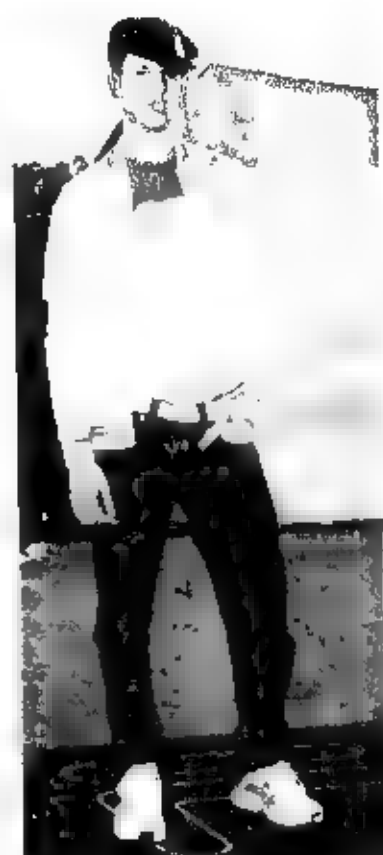
Athletic gear for man, women and children by Fila L'arte Nello Sport



WHIMSICAL colors



SEXY and sporty



COLOR, comfort and style



Lacroix up close

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

CHRISTIAN LACROIX MADE HIS renown with the pompous splendor of his designs, couture highly wrought with trappings that hinted at hundreds of bleeding, calloused-finger hours and, possibly, even eyesights lost.

Until May 4, Filipinos are afforded a rare chance to witness up close Lacroix's body of work in an exhibit of 63 couture pieces from the Frenchman's private collection.

"Christian Lacroix Dialogues!" is a joint effort of the Alliance Francaise de Manille, the French embassy, the Association Francaise d'Action Artistique and the Ayala Museum, as part of "French Spring in Manila 2006."

"French Spring" is primarily a showcase of contemporary French art, and is now on its eighth year in Manila.

The Lacroix exhibit covers 17 years of the designer's work, beginning from the mid-'80s when he debuted the first collection for his eponymous fashion house.

"Dialogues!" was first shown in Lacroix's native France before touring China and Thailand. Ayala Museum is the third leg of its world tour before it makes the last jaunt in Israel.

Yves Sabourin, the exhibit's curator, said the display is customized to correspond with the sensibilities and traditions of each host country, so that here, a portion bearing several gowns with striking Spanish influences was set up to look like a religious altar. Two gowns, rather surreally, are laid out on black, tomb-like platforms on opposite ends, one a red-bellied sumptuous black lace confection. "Sleeping beauties," Sabourin called them. Religious articles, like crucifixes, appear throughout some of the other garments.

Several interesting works by other artists, some from Lacroix's own collection, are also interspersed with the display, instituting the influences of the designer, an art history graduate who had worked at Hermes and Jean Patou at the start of his career and, until last year, was artistic director of the Florentine



Until May 4, couture pieces by the famed French designer are on exhibit at the Ayala Museum

fashion house Emilio Pucci.

Though none of his more recent bridal designs for celebrity clients (notably pop star Christina Aguilera who wore a Lacroix to her wedding last year) are included in the exhibit, there are, in fact, several highly ornate bridal pieces, like a blue-satin-bellied cloud of tulle with a matching mid-century halo-like headpiece. Another is a heavily beaded black garment. It's a bridal gown, Sabourin assured.

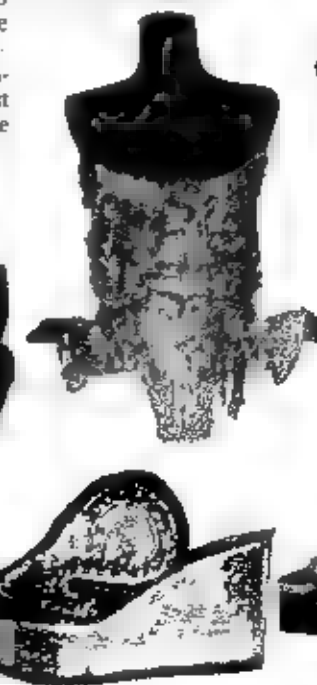
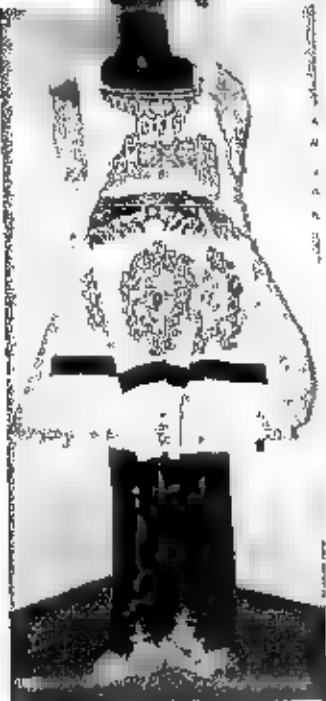
Several footwear and accessories are also on display, including some of his corsets. Madonna famously donned Lacroix's corset in her "Reinvention World Tour" in 2004.

The delicate garments are strictly hands-off to museum-goers, though Sabourin said they are intentionally not glass-encased to allow a more intimate experience of the fashion artist that is Lacroix.

Call the Ayala Museum at 7577117 to 21 for the schedule of guided tours.



YVES Sabourin



Fab five of F.A.M.E.

MAN LA F.A.M.E. INTERNATIONAL showcases contemporary home furnishings, houseware, holiday décor and fashion accessories designed by five of the country's top creative minds April 19-22. Featured are Cesar Gaupo (home furnishings), Tas Pasaja (holiday décor), Bea Valdes and Yvonne Quinsimban-Romulo (fashion accessories), and Carlo Tanseco for "Evolution." Organized by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Citem), the export promotions agency of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the exhibits will

be at the World Trade Center Philippine Trade Training Center East Pavilion, and the Forum and Reception Hall of Philippine International Convention Center. The public is invited 11 a.m.-4 p.m., April 22. Entrance fee is P150. No children below 12 years old. Call 8331256, fax 8323985, e-mail hardgoods@citam.com.ph or visit www.man-lafame.com.

FESTIVAL SM City Sta. Rosa, with the Laguna Provincial Tourism Office and the Sta. Rosa Tourism Office, presents the celebra-

tion of the Pandan Festival of Lutsiana on April 21. The month-long festivities include Street Dancing (April 21), Pandan Fashion Show (April 25), Miss Laguna competition (talent competition on April 19, crowning of the new Miss Laguna on April 22), Miss Laguna Face Model Search launch (April 27), and the Sta. Rosa fiesta celebration (with street dancing and spectacular fireworks display on April 29).

FIREFLIES TOUR. The 2006 Tour of the Fireflies will be held 7 a.m. on April 23. Cov-

ering a distance of 47 kilometers, the tour will start from and end at Tienditas. Ortigas corner C5 in Pasig City and will take visitors to N. Domingo, Hemady, E. Rodriguez, Welcome Rotonda, España, Lerma, Quezon Boulevard, Quiapo, Quezon Bridge, Muelle del Rio, Andres Soriano Jr., Arda Circle, Roxas Boulevard, Baywalk, Pablo Ocampo Sr., Macapagal Avenue, Edsa Extension, Osmeña Highway, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Ayala Avenue, Paseo de Roxas, Alim. Makati Avenue, P. Burgos, Makati-Mandaluyong Bridge, Coronado, San Fran-

cisco, Maysilo 9 de Pebrero, Shaw Boulevard, Edsa, Kalipunan Avenue, Temple Drive, Greenmeadows Avenue, and C5.

BABY FAIR Robinsons Department Store (RDS) presents "Baby Fair", offering discounts, prizes and surprises for parents and babies until April 30. Find everything your baby needs at the fair—from nursery essentials like playpens, cribs, feeding bottles, booties, mittens and high chairs to bath tubs, towels and other bathing and grooming basics.

Ramon Valera isn't the only winner

RAMON VALERA ISN'T THE only winner in the 2006 National Artists Awards. Fashion design is as much a winner, too. Fashion design has been included under architecture and design but not without first overcoming hurdles.

Primary among these is the mindset that fashion isn't art. We could imagine this was a point of debate in the deliberations leading to the selection.

Fashion design can be elevated to art transcending generations. It is a creative process—a medium through which the designer communicates to the world at large, embodying his culture, which in turn can connect to other cultures.

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sison San Juan

Consider the designer's process of creation. An inspiration, a passion—anything from his milieu or from his very existence—drives him to make up a design concept. Love of theater led Yves Saint Laurent toward his early sketches. Coco Chanel drew inspiration from the bohemian lifestyle around her—the coastal life in Deauville, her lover's horse

Fashion design overcame a big hurdle in the National Artists Awards



LACROIX hand-painted satin coat dress from 1987 collection (left) and Lacroix organza T-shirt top with embroidered flower appliques (right), both from Ayala Museum exhibit



riding. This freewheeling lifestyle drove her to junk the corset that had shackled the woman's body until then, to loosen the silhouette and the waist, dropping it to the hips. This was a turning point in women's fashion that was constricting and structured at the turn of the century.

Signposts

Fashion's creative process is neither less laborious nor less informed and inspired than that of, say, a painter or sculptor.

How does the fashion designer's work impact on society or even the world?

One doesn't have to be a scholar to note that through history, clothes or fashion have served as signposts of the historical era. For example: Christian Dior's New Look was the symbol of the post-war Twiggy and the miniskirt are the visual icons of the '60s.

In the Philippines, there is the terno—from the Ramon Valera terno that was the hallmark of the '50s to the lavish terno of Imelda Marcos that has become the visual representation of the Filipino, for good or bad.

Fashion design doesn't only affect society. In several cases, it becomes the representation of that community, perhaps even more so than other forms of art that are not readily accessible to the population.

Thanks to a highly graphic and speedy media, fashion design has permeated our daily life, cutting across classes. Fashion is visual, and today's media is highly visual.

Fashion design is not limited to its exposure in media. It is also what feeds today's events in the malls. The malls, today's "cathedrals of culture"—like it or not—hold regular fashion shows. Why? Because it doesn't take a marketing whiz to know that fashion shows convey the message best to the masses.

In this way fashion design, even as it puts on the gaze, is not limited to the elite. It is not elitist. Because of every person's basic need to clothe himself or to look good, fashion is part and parcel of daily existence.

It is thus interesting how, through sheer passion and creativity, our designers toil to elevate fashion to art. They are not dissuaded by lack of government support, or by the refusal of scholars to recognize their work as art, or by the limited supply of materials.

Is fashion just craft? Fashion has gone beyond function or mechanical routine. Fashion design has held the world in awe, in various periods.

Museums in Paris, New York and London have placed their haute couturiers alongside the great painters, sculptors and other masters. Yves Saint Laurent, Chanel, Balenciaga, Christian Dior have seen their works on exhibit in these museums—thus continuing to communicate not only to audiences the world over, but also to generations. Through their body of work, these designers have lived beyond their lifetime.

This year, the Museum of Modern Art in New York will pay homage to living British designers by devoting several period rooms of the Museum to their work in an event put together by Vogue's Anna Wintour and curated by its leading scholars.

On exhibit at Ayala Museum until May is "Christian Lacroix Dialogues!" featuring Lacroix's gowns and dresses (look for his black dress made of raffia), and accessories from his own collection, mounted with interesting artworks and art objects to denote how this genius of a designer relates his creations to their milieu.

It's the kickoff event of the French Spring in Manila, a month-long series of events held by the French Embassy, the Alliance Française and the Association Française d'Action Artistique. You don't have to be a fashion lover to find this exhibit a highly informative and interesting experience (until May 4).

Amid this backdrop here and abroad, we like to think it's become moot to debate whether or not fashion design should be included in the National Artists Awards.

Gaupo at Citem

Over the weekend, check out Citem's annual Manila FAME International at World Trade Center and PITC. We're looking forward to seeing Cesar Gaupo's designs of home accessories and furnishings—from lamps to bed.

His perspective in designing for the home? He wants pieces that become topics of conversation. He drew his inspiration from whatever captured his fancy, like Polynesian tattoos. Last night he held his Shoe Couture Launch and Fashion Show at Le Pavilion.

E-mail thelma_sisonjuan@abs.pnycntr.com

NEW

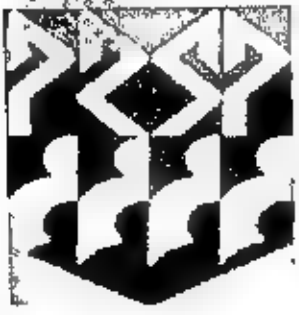
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41st Anvil Opens New PR Horizon



41st Anvil Awards

Inquirer, Pfizer win top Anvil Awards

'Tears of Hope, Tears of Health' wins Grand Anvil



THE "TEARS OF HOPE, TEARS OF HEALTH" campaign of Pfizer's Visine Refresh and the Eye Bank Foundation of the Philippines (EBFP) has won the Anvil award in the 41st Anvil Awards of the Public Society of the Philippines (PRSP). The advocacy campaign was designed to educate the public on proper eye health and care, raise funds for EBFP operations and get more Filipinos to sign as cornea and eye donors. It has garnered the support of over 40 Filipino celebrities who have donated their time, image and likeness to the campaign. Since the launch of the program in May, thousands of Filipinos are now card-carrying donors and actual retrieval of cornea donations has doubled, increasing the amount of available corneal tissue for transplant twofold. Financial pledges and donations

to the EBFO have also increase, allowing for more corneal transplant surgery for indigent patients. The Grand Anvil award is the third for Pfizer and its PR agency, Perceptions, Inc., in the last four years. Photo shows (from left): Kristen Mariano, Visine Refresh product manager; Vicente del Fierro, Jr., Anvil Awards Committee chairman; Dean Belen Tanco, Anvil Awards judge; Mio Chiongso, Blue Bottle managing director; former Senator Heherson T. Alvarez; Dr. Dominga 'Mangita' Padilla EBFP founder and president; Karen Villanueva, Pfizer Corporate Affairs director; Marietta Goco, Anvil Awards judge; Winston Marbella, PRSP president; Robert Asprez, Pfizer Consumer Healthcare marketing director and Tina Abesamis, Perceptions PR executives.

The 41st National Anvil Awards of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) held at the Manila Hotel before the Holy Week recess ushered in a new era in professional public relations and communications management that will endure the test of time and generation. The new PRSP thrust that is closely attuned to the wave of the future for responsive and developmental communications of the 49 years old national organization of Public Relations and Communications professional, was distinctly manifested in the wide diversity of Anvil Award winning entries from various multinational and domestic Philippine corporations, foundations, educational institutions, national govern-

ment instrumentalities and agencies and local government units in Metro Manila and key cities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. In a way, the Anvil and the PRSP organization behind the prestigious recognition has effectively spread from the traditional corporate neighborhoods of Metro Manila into a national search of excellence in public relations and communications management which must adopt in cadence to the currency of the evolving times in Philippine culture and society. Vicente del Fierro Jr. the chairman of the 41st Anvil Award and the newly installed president of the 49 years old Public Relations Society of the Philippines said that the Anvil this year marked the departure of professional PR and communications management from the traditional, dazzling glitz and gloss of programs, campaigns, events and tools support-

ed through orchestrated manipulated media spins, and hypes from ad revenue beneficiaries who act as indispensable accessories to conjure false public acceptance. The dawn of this new horizon synthesized in the flood of entries, would affect the charlatans and the mediocre PR pretenders in the public relations and communications profession since they must now tow the universal principles of truth and ethics, and at the same time sharpen their competence to cope with the empowered demands of the public relations industry wherein authentic and meaningful projects, programs, special events, campaigns and tools must find social niche and relevance to the interest and welfare of its diversified stakeholders for the benefit of the country.

"The era of developmental public relations and communications management is here," said del Fierro.



The First Grand Anvil Award for Philippine Daily Inquirer. Testament to PDI's 20 Years of service.



They say the Filipino can. We agree. In recognition of PLDT's excellence from 2002 to 2005 by the prestigious award-giving bodies in business, we humbly share these shining moments with you.



Special PROJECT

Inquirer, Pfizer win top Anvil Awards

From page F

agement has begun." Said the Anvil chairman who was also inducted as president of the PRSP in the same event.

The new PRSP president a veteran PR practitioner and a free lance journalist since the late 60s is also a public issue lobbyist in Congress, and an internationally acknowledged consumer advocate who gained global recognition when he stood up and filed a \$400 million class action in New York on behalf of Philippine consumers who were duped and victimized in a deceptive nationwide promotions by a U.S. based transnational food and beverage giant who has been relentlessly avoiding its corporate social responsibility at all costs to thousands of poor consumers for the

past 14 years.

Del Piarro, along with outgoing president Winston Marbella, PRSP vice president Juan Dayang, Larry Zurita and other past and newly elected board of directors witnessed the presentation of the much coveted Anvil trophies to the winners led by the 41st Grand Anvil winner Philippine Daily Inquirer which shared the plum Grand Anvil Honors with Pfizer for its Tears of Hope and Tears of Health, an advocacy with the Eye Bank Foundation that also had the Inquirer as its media partner.

It was the first Grand Anvil Award for the Philippine Daily Inquirer which entered its 41st year of publication. The award recognizes the Inquirer's different stakeholders which makes a

difference and ultimately builds a good business reputation, a good name, and enduring corporate legacy.

PDI president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez personally received the Grand Anvil trophy, the first in the 20 years of the Inquirer, and introduced the Inquirer team which conceptualized and implemented the winning project.

Sharing the equal honors of the Grand Anvil was Pfizer Tears of Hope, an advocacy which supported the Eye Bank Foundation headed by Dra. Mengutia Padilla.

Based on the Anvil's recent history, Pfizer is a traditional barometer of Anvil Awards which serves as a reservoir of goodwill and fortification of its business

reputation against all threats and criticisms even those pontifically motivated.

As if by coincidence, the Philippine Daily Inquirer was the media advocacy partner of Pfizer in the Visine advocacy campaign for the Eye Bank Foundation.

Sharing the Anvil honors for their various community projects, tools, and programs apart from multinational and Philippine corporate firms, are multi-sectoral foundations, educational institutions, national government agencies and branches, and local government leaders headed by Governor Victor Ortega of the province of La Union, Mayor Florencio Bernabe Jr. of Paranaque City, Mayor Evelio Leonadia of Bacolod City and Governor

Emanuel Pinol of Kidapawan, Cotabato and Pasay City Mayor Peewee Trinidad.

The complete list of winners and the synopsis of their campaigns, programs and winning Anvil tools along with photos are featured in a separate story in this supplement.

Del Piarro disclosed, that the Anvil finalists were separately and independently screened, reviewed and adjudged with individual score tables by a multi-sectoral board of judges known for their impeccable integrity and competence in their respective field of expertise led by its Chairman former Senator and currently presidential adviser on Overseas Filipino Communities Secretary Heherson Alvarez.

The other Anvil jurors included Marietta Primicias Goco, a lead convenor of the Coalition for Charter Change who is the only Filipino recipient of the Eleanor Roosevelt Peace Awards of the United States Secretary Cerge Remonde, presidential media adviser, Raul Alvarez, PLDT vice president, and president of the Advertising Board, Mitos Comahort, a top official of Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of the Philippines. Dr. Belen Tanco, Dean of the College of Arts & Letters of the University of Santo Tomas, and Dr. Bernardo Villagas one of the most respected economists in the Philippines, from the University of Asia and Pacific.

Golden Quotes from the 41st Anvil Awards

Like any other Filipino organization, dichotomy among leaders of any association, be it here in the Philippines and overseas, is a ready and ingrained feature in our character as a nation.

When the 41st Anvil National Award was conducted, we had to operate within the limit of our human capacity and sought divine

intervention that our efforts though admittedly insignificant will be our humble offering to glorify God through the good deeds that forms the collective Good News from the conscious authentic compassion to serve, and share with the different stakeholders of society the task of providing examples and models for others to

follow and multiply.

From the quotable quotes during the Anvil highlights, it all left us with the lasting impression that God answered our prayers, and was evidently in full control of the total Anvil proceedings from the invocation to the last final remarks that night of April 7, 2006.

"Make me a servant, humble and meek Lord, let me lift up those who are weak." The inspiring invocation sets the tone for the Anvil Awards.



"Leaders must serve to lead. We need to raise a breed of servant leaders in the country." Former Senator and DILG Secretary Joey Lino in his opening remarks as president of the Manila Hotel during the Anvil Awards.



"It is a great honor to have somebody epitomize the best and the brightest in corporate governance. He is at heart an environmentalist and led legislative initiatives for environmental protection." Winston Marbella, outgoing PRSP president and ex-officio director.



"We are not known for our ability to work collectively. Even our basketball associations are still quarrelling." "But we are gifted, charming brilliant people with the knowledge, competence and ability to play it well. We have a pool of creative talent that we could pluck if we have more of these Anvil awards. It won't take long when the Anvil will push this country into great modernization." Former Senator Heherson Alvarez, chairman of the Anvil Jurors in his keynote speech.



"Merely documenting issues and people is not enough. Going that extra mile, making a change in one and other people's lives is the broadcaster's ultimate mission." Rey Langit, famous broadcaster. Journalist quoting the ideals of his late son Reyaster Langit whose legacy led to the Kasangay Kaay Langit foundation which also won an Anvil Award.



"Sight is the most important of the senses. You learn 80% through your sight. When one loses his vision, he loses all hope. Eye Bank brings hope. The Anvil award will help us help more people." Dra. Dominga 'Mengutia' Padilla, president of Eye Bank Foundation, in behalf of the Pfizer Eye Bank project with shared top honors as Grand Anvil Awards shared with its media partner Philippine Daily Inquirer.



"Just one more traffic light and I would have lost the chance of receiving the award. The award is a testament to the 20 years of the Philippine Daily Inquirer as a newspaper worthy of the people trust. Public Relations must serve the stakeholders of the company by connecting them to the inner values and vision of an organization, and allow them to be partners to make a difference in society." Society President Heherson Alvarez, president of Philippine Daily Inquirer, leading making it to the Anvil Awards because of trust. He shared to the Grand Anvil, the first for the Inquirer for 20 years.



"The 41st Anvil National Awards represents the good deeds of men of goodwill that forms the Good News in today's society. Let us all promote the interest and welfare of other people by doing good to our fellow men not only for this season of Lent. Moreover, let us all multiply and become men for others for all season." Vic del Piarro Jr., chairman of the 41st Anvil and new President of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines.

Protect your family inside and out.

At home, you'd keep your family safe no matter what it takes. But once they step out, where they go and what they do -- is way beyond you.

Protect your family at all times.

Ask your doctor about:

FAMILY ACCINES

YOUR POWER TO PROTECT

An Initiative of GlaxoSmithKline

PR Awards extend to LGUs, NGOs and Academe

THE 41ST ANNUAL ANVIL AWARDS OF the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) is now open to local government units, non government organizations expands to include the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and those projects in line with corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Vic del Fierro Jr., chairman of the 41st Anvil Award of the PRSP announced the move as a strategic step to make the Anvil Award, considered to be the Oscar in the professional practice of public relations, as catalyst in hastening the actualization of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to make our world worth living.

This year's Anvil chairperson has been an active participant in recent years as an NGO representative in development global meetings in recent years held in Geneva, Switzerland under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

A veteran public relations professional, he is also considered as the Philippines counterpart of Ralph Nader, America's foremost consumer advocate who stood up against General Motors. He represented Philippine consumers in Asian and international Congress network alliance in Europe.

Del Fierro fought for thousands of poor Filipino consumers duped in a national promotions by one of the biggest food and beverage transnational corporations of the United States, and filed a \$400 million class suit in New York against this US multinational go-liath on the issue of consumer justice and corporate social responsibility.

He said that the Anvil Awards represents the good news in the Philippines since it is a traditional showcase of corporate involvement and triumphs of conscious organized human endeavor geared for the welfare of the community and the public at large which is the bottom line goal of public relations.

Del Fierro said, "This year, we are infusing a more substantial meaning beyond the realm of corporate marketing glitz to include consumer welfare and protection, environmental consciousness, poverty alleviation projects, child welfare, alternatives development, which may be entered by private and public corporations and non-government organizations, media entities, medical establishments, medical networks and the academe, as well as local government units, particularly cities and provinces and private foundations.

Other community and public affairs projects and even marketing campaigns with social impact to its target public audience are welcomed as entries in addition to the expanded projects that are aligned with the eight United Nations Millennium goals, which are as follows:

1. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Deliver universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Del Fierro pointed out that there are tons of good news stories quietly underwritten by NGOs, civic and trade associations, schools and

universities, media organizations, private foundations, local government units (cities and provinces) as well as private and government corporations enough to drown out the avalanche of negative news in the national media daily.

The national recognition of this noble projects and corporate involvements through the Anvil Awards of the PRSP should inspire others to emulate and compete for excellence in unselfish sharing its resources, expertise, and talents for the welfare of the public.

In pursuit of this socially relevant horizon for the Anvil Awards, Del Fierro expressed optimism that the Anvil will serve as a medium for cross-pollination of human triumphs embodied as good news essentially anchored for the public good and welfare as manifested the wider range of participants from various stakeholders of society today.

He added that the bottom-line of public relations is the upliftment and welfare of people, for without it, public relations activities become a callous self-serving exercise for companies to award

themselves annually and feel good through positive corporate publicity.

In pursuit of this socially relevant new horizon for the Anvil Awards, Del Fierro expressed optimism that the Anvil will serve as a medium for cross-pollination of human triumphs embodied as good news essentially anchored for the public good and welfare as manifested the wider range of participants from various stakeholders of society today.

"In doing so, we cultivate and nurture a national culture of concern and compassion in uplifting the plight of the

poor, powerless and the marginalized members of society," Del Fierro underscored.

This year's 41st Anvil Award is also presented in cooperation with the Coalition for Consumer Protection & Welfare, Inc., Publishers Associations of the Philippines and Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies.

Entries to the expanded Anvil Awards were sent to the chairman, Vic del Fierro, Jr. at 104 Gaiety St. Annex 1618 Better Living Subdivision. Tel nos. 821-6417 / 824-3571 / 824-5802.

Pfizer Continues Tradition of Leadership, Excellence and Community Service

We at Pfizer dedicate ourselves to helping people by discovering, developing and providing safe and effective healthcare products that help people lead healthier, longer and happier lives. We are committed to continue investing in research and development in order to find new and better medicines that save lives, prevent diseases, address unmet medical needs and improve the quality of life of Filipinos.

Pfizer lives out its tradition of serving the community through groundbreaking partnership programs involving major stakeholders in government, medical community, academe and industry. These programs signify our sincere commitment to making a significant and sustainable difference in the community by addressing healthcare concerns.

In recent years, we have also been at the forefront of promoting public safety by providing leadership and resources for advocacy campaigns that reaffirm our commitment of protecting the health of Filipinos.

Being recognized for these works truly encourages us to carry on and create meaningful programs that will make a difference in as many lives as possible. We share this award - **our third Grand Anvil** - with our employees and our partners, whose support has always been vital to the success of these programs.

Maraming Salamat Po!

Dapat Sulit.

Pfizer



The Public Relations Society of the Philippines

presents this

GRAND ANVIL AWARD

to

TEARS OF HOPE, TEARS OF HEALTH

of **PFIZER'S VISINE REFRESH**

Synopsis and Photos of 41st Awardees

Anvil Tools



Jun Lozano executive vice president receiving the Anvil Award of Merit for De La Salle Lipa for their 2004-2005 annual report entitled 'Ad Vincula: The President's Report'. It contained the accomplishments of De La Salle - Lipa's academic and service units. It sought to reinforce its community's linkages and bonds by showcasing De La Salle Lipa's drive for excellence and its integrity in keeping its audience well-informed.



Iris Cariaga senior senior PR manager, Tina Abesamis, PR executive Joy Mirasol, - PR executive receiving the award for The 23rd SEA Games Song 'We're All Just One' entered by Rene Nieva for the Philippine 23rd SEA Games. Played throughout the games until the closing ceremonies, it kept the fires of friendly competition and unity burning. This song also embodied 'One Heritage, One Southeast Asia', the theme of the 23rd SEA Games.



Mila Balabag creative director, Agnes Cristobal copy writer, Jose Mario Bunsag Commissioner BIR are receiving the award for E-VAT TVCs 'Toyang' and 'Teacher' Entered by Corporate Image Dimensions for the Department of Finance. Through two creatively produced TVCs, it fostered an improved general opinion for E-VAT. It also aided the finance department in disseminating mechanics-specific information to a more open public. May Resulta TVCs entered by Corporate Image Dimensions. Using a series of TVCs tied up with trade organizations, it presented the achievements of the Philippine government in its socio-economic programs. It gave Filipinos a chance to positively view the efforts of the government in improving micro finance for small businesses, patubig, trabaha, RORO and free education.

Award of Excellence



Melvin Abanto - VP corporate affairs, Benet T. Laguna - president and COO are shown receiving in behalf of Small Business Guarantee and Financial Corp for their 2004 annual report entitled 'The Creative Worker for the Creative Economy'. It captured the spirit that made small and medium sized enterprises produce brilliant unexpected results despite the economic challenges of 2004. It also featured how the Small Business Corporation provided the necessary muscle to help SMEs thrive in a very competitive market.



Litz Santana - public affairs division head is shown receiving the Anvil Award in behalf of Quezon Power Philippines for its 2005 calendar. This calendar captures the purity and innocence of childhood through one-of-a-kind photographs of children who are at work or at play in the fields, rivers, falls, roads, and plazas of Mauban, Quezon. It speaks of how home-grown values help a child become an empowered citizen of the world in the future. Quezon Power Philippines for its quarterly newsletter titled 'Tinig ng Kaulokaran'. Written in the old Tagalog dialect used by Quezon natives to cater to its main reading public-the residents of Mauban, Quezon, this 8-page newsletter effectively features columns and articles detailing the companies community and sustainable development programs. Quezon Power Philippines for its brochure entitled 'The Power to Change Lives'. It illustrated, through words and photographs, how the company continues to be guided by its 4 core values of integrity, teamwork, entrepreneurship, and corporate social responsibility. Quezon Power Philippines for the Educational Component of their Sustainable Development Program. This program sponsors deserving young people to pursue college or skills education. It also sponsors the additional training of public school teachers to provide the children of Mauban, Quezon with equal opportunity for quality education.

Bronze Anvil

PLDT executives Ramon Isberto - corporate affairs head, Horacio Lavidas - media services head, Sennen Lacsamana - media section head, Jun Sambalillo - media senior publications assistant, Anthony Alcantara - media senior publications assistant and Evelyn del Rosarin, community relations manager with their winning victorious smiles and toasts for the Bronze Anvil Award for PLDT for their monthly publication Access Magazine. Described by its readers as classy, smashing, and intelligent, ACCESS Magazine is a powerful vehicle where the company keeps its employees informed with the latest in PLDT. Its style and presentation exemplify the company's paradigm of innovation and hard work. PLDT for their 2005 Desk Calendar. Through Romi Santiago's classic Baltic and Co. comic strip and words of wisdom from TOYM awardees, PLDT Group employees were treated to a calendar that was both fun and inspiring at the same time. It was designed to encourage PLDT



employees to have a productive and fun-filled year. PLDT for their 2004 annual report entitled 'Ahead of the Curve'. Its 140 pages moved within the premise that an annual report with quality information was the pipeline for good investor relations. Thus, its extensive Financials section reflected the

company's desire to communicate clearly and effectively with its stockholders, PLDT for their 2005 Diary. A planner that uniquely looked back into the past as it narrated PLDT's 75 years of contributing to the growth of the country through innovative services that helped spur economic developments.



Jose Mario Bunsag Commissioner BIR receiving the award for BIR File-Your-Income-Tax TVC Campaign 'Negosyante' and 'TTR' Entered by Corporate Image Dimensions for the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Its two TVCs successfully showcased the benefits of being a conscientious tax payer to one's business reputation and the critical necessity of having an ITR to be able to transact business with public and private entities.

Noel Albano, Deputy Secretary General for Media of the House of Representatives is shown receiving in behalf of House of Representatives for their Newsletter entitled 'The Forum'. As a face-off for mainstream media's representation of issues and personalities in Congress, this publication consciously aims to present a clear, sober and factual report of the happenings in The House of Representatives. Since its first publication, it has become an authoritative record of the Congress's trials and triumphs. House of Representatives for its proposal entitled Debt-for-Equity in Millennium Development Goals Projects. This proposal seeks to convert half of the debt owed by 100 heavily-indebted countries into equity in sustainable development projects identified with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals. It offers both lender and debtor nations a viable way out of the debt trap for the world's most heavily-indebted middle-income countries.



Awards of Excellence for PR Programs

The City Government of Pasay for their program Community-Based Monitoring System, Implemented in 201 Barangays. A program that provided valuable data regarding poverty in Pasay, its gathered information paved the way for a more efficient implementation of appropriate intervention methods to combat poverty in Pasay city.



Noel Isberto - president / executive director is shown receiving the award in behalf of GlaxoSmithKline's Family Vaccines Program. This campaign effectively induced a shift in the public's perception of the value of vaccination. It also reinforced GlaxoSmithKline's role as a caring partner that provides valuable health information and as a trustworthy provider of reliable, safe and effective vaccines.



Mayor Evelio R. Leonorda with Mrs. Liza Leonorda, Eli Tajanlangit of the Masskara Festival 2005 are shown receiving the award in behalf of The City Government of Bacolod for its successful celebration of its Masskara Festival 2005. As the front act for the ceremonies of the 23rd SEA Games, this annual festival became much more than the usual fiesta activity. The involvement of Bacolod's artists turned Masskara 2005 into an arts festival that strengthened the position of this city in the tourism map. The City of Bacolod for its Enhancement of its One-Stop-Shop or Tax Revenue and Collection System. To complement its upgraded centralized system of processing and issuing business permits, the city gave out simple yet effective information slips to the public. This slips contained instructions on what to do and where to go in the municipal office for certain services. It facilitated a very efficient delivery of service advantageous to all concerned. The City Government of Bacolod for its Indigenous Supplementary Mixture Feeding Program or the Insunim Program. This program aimed and succeeded in improving the nutritional status of undernourished schoolchildren through supplementary feeding. Through it, many schoolchildren of Bacolod have a better chance of reaching their full potentials.



Meralco Foundation Inc. for its scholars recruitment campaign for its Industrial Technician Program. An annual series of activities aimed at selecting 150 scholars that will undergo its Industrial Technician program. Interested and qualified applicants are sought through numerous school visits and career talks. The very rigid process involved only seems to encourage applicants to try their mettle so as to belong to the chosen few.



The Enchanted Kingdom for its Celebration of 10 Magical Years entered by Ruby Communications Consultancy. This was a year-long series of activities that successfully increased park attendance and revenues. It included a jaw-dropping fireworks display, a comic magazine, and a movie starring Ramon 'Boang' Revilla. This campaign also highlighted Enchanted Kingdom's journey over the past ten years as the country's only world-class theme park.



The City of Parañaque for its citywide cleanliness drive entered by PLDT. Together with establishing the proper infrastructures for its cleanliness drive, the city of Parañaque used all possible information tools to educate and discipline its constituents in the proper disposal and segregation of waste. All its efforts resulted in a much healthier and cleaner Parañaque.



Father and son duo of Rey Langit and his junior for the Hip TV Inc. for Kasangga Maang Langit Foundation. Through its television program, it created an awareness of the plight of the Tau't Batu group, whose surviving members were plagued with malaria. Its efforts also included a medical mission and an educational campaign in Subic, Zambales, where a high number of malaria cases were also reported.

Toyota Motors Philippines for its Toyota Classics event entitled A World of Harmony. This event stars world-renowned orchestras who perform side by side Filipino artists of classical music. It promotes the appreciation of arts and culture and, at the same time, proudly showcases the brilliance of Filipino talent. Its ticket sales are donated to specific organizations chosen by Toyota Motors. Toyota Motors Philippines for Brainstorm! The Toyota Vios Integrated Marketing Communications Challenge. It invited young people from different universities and colleges to participate in Toyota's commendable new approach in improving its brand. The program sought a more personal and interactive level of market penetration through the fresh, brilliant ideas of its youthful participants.



Florentino Espana, Jr., vice president management services group, is shown in behalf of Pag-ibig Fund for its Tapat sa Pag-ibig, Tapat sa Kapwa Campaign. This Advertising and promotions program helped promote public awareness on the various services and benefits of being a Pag-ibig member. It also encouraged its current members to diligently keep up with their Pag-ibig obligations because it is ultimately for their and their fellow members' own good.



Warning issued amidst a plethora of public awards

Hallmark of real and bogus awards

LAST MONTH, NO LESS THAN A RESPECTED WELL-established professional organization of many years had no recourse but to circulate to the wide diversity of business aggregation about the "excellence honors" which has been widely swallowed by large number of business establishments and entities, estimated to be in the vicinity of 1,000 entries who paid their fees as soon as they were notified of their selection as awardees.

Without even divulging any criteria in the matter of award selection or the how the evaluation and judging was conducted by focus group or by a committee of one person, the awardee's thirst and hunger for public honors motivate them to cough out sums of money "in five figures to the operators of such "honors" for sale.

Here are some hallmarks of spurious or bogus awards which are actually millstones displayed on the neck of those who unwittingly lavished with pride their honors acquired for valuable cash in return.

1. Check out thoroughly the integrity and competence of the organizers and the persona of those behind the search for excellence. Some of these don't even ring a bell or even a tiny squeak. But they generate publicity mileage with the indispensable cooperation of some paid press sectors in the dark side. If you are not convince of the background of these men and women, one should stay away from this honors for lobby or sale.

2. Check out the judges profile. Some may just be lobbying for their clients management. If many of these judges come from the same ranks of the organization, and not from an independent multi-sectoral representation, stay out of the awards, your company may just be an accessory to what is actually an annual self-bestowed honors reserved primarily to endear the top executives to management perception.

3. Judging should be individually first before any en banc evaluations for the ranking of winners. Again, one should not be deceived by the volumes of advanced publicity on the award since many of such bogus awards are projected as worthy due to the indispensable cooperation of some media partners in the negative side of journalism.

4. Awards notice done by spurious "focus groups" is a red light to be avoided. But nevertheless, there are hundreds of firms who are really starving for such doubtful recognition, and even go to the extent to display this in their ads and billboards.

So beware. Caveat emptor. When the signs of such suspected awards are detected avoid it. It's a millstone tied to the corporate neck. It's a badge of shame and a liability to a company's reputation.

On the other hand a well earned award done independently will enhance corporate and brand equity, integrity, corporate citizenship and the public's abiding faith in the leadership of such organized private and public entities in Metro Manila or in key cities of the Philippines.

He changed the face of PRSP

By Winnie S. Ferrer

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH the Public Relations Society of the Philippines was over ten years ago when I was requested by a college friend then the managing editor of the nationwide broadsheets to do the supplement of the Anvil Awards.

I am a PR practitioner too so it tickled my interest but I concluded that these awards were for the high end corporations. So for that moment, I just shelved PRSP in my memory banks.

I cannot say exactly when or the circumstances that led to my acquaintance with Vic del Fierro but I know that he knew my father and uncle and we had common friends.

I was asked to emcee for him during his Silver Wedding Anniversary and it was only three years ago when I started seeing more of him and got involved in a coalition for consumer protection.

Vic is the man behind the movement of the Pepsi 349 who has risked life and limb for the rights of the consumers, so this was nothing new to him.

It was only late last year that I learned that he had been chosen to chair the Anvil Awards and had been requested to continue for the incoming year when he asked me to do the creative for the flyer which contained the various categories as well as the guidelines for joining the competition.

For the very first time and amidst so much controversy, Vic was able to change the face of the PRSP Anvil Awards. He decided to open the categories and widen the scope to include national and local government units, environmental concerns, and non-government project proponents.

For the very first time, he was able to steer the PRSP away from the usual self-limiting corporate

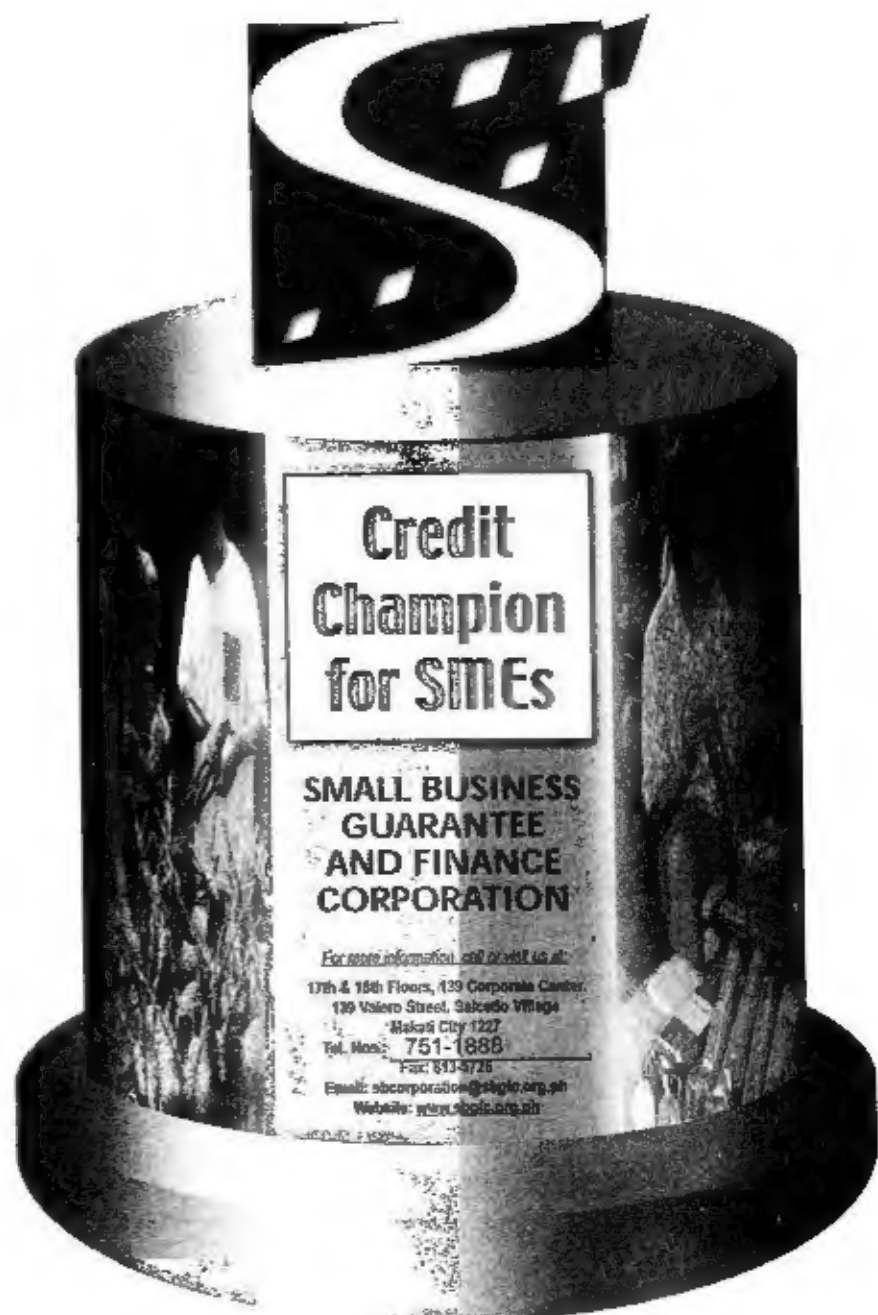
glitz and position it to more level ground accessible to the everyday Filipino.

For the very first time, he was able to open wide a front where achievements which otherwise would have remained unnoticed, would now gain recognition and urge its proponents and so many others to strive in their response to social responsibility at home, in the workplace, and in the community.

For the very first time, he was able to spread the good news about Filipinos in spite of the arid economic atmosphere and the negative accounts of daily goings-on in the nationwide dailies.

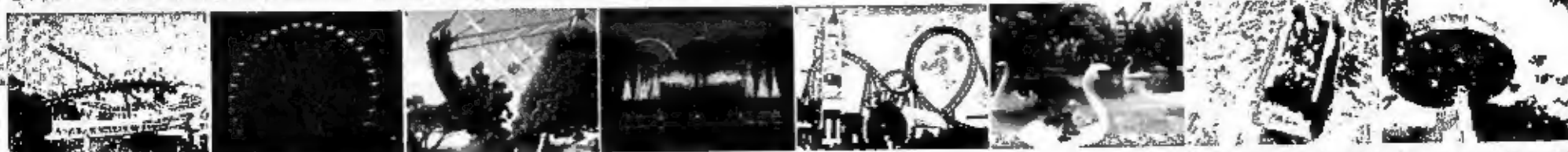
For one brief shining moment, one could feel the pride that he was a Filipino and part of nation which could do so much to improve his life and the lives of his countrymen.

Thank you, Vic, so many needed that well-deserved pat on the back!



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ROAD MAP & DIRECTION OF THE NEW PRSP BOARD

Internalize the mantra of corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship

The new dynamic and committed PRSP board takes their oath of office before former Senator Heherson Alvarez (extreme right), chairman of the Anvil jurors. From left: Juan P. Dayang, vice president for international affairs, Winston Marbella, ex-officio director, Catherine Trumata, auditor, Larry Zurita, treasurer, Vicente del Fierro Jr., president and 41st Anvil Awards chairman, Noel Albano, director and chairman of the 2006 National Public Relations Congress; and Ronnie Preza, secretary. Not in photo are: Antonio Samson, vice president for external affairs; Ulysses Antonio C. Rivera, director and Wivina Ferrer, director.



SHORTLY AFTER THEIR INDUCTION DURING the Anvil Award presentation, the newly inducted board of directors of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines mapped out its direction geared towards the promotions of corporate social responsibility executed with flair and style to various private and government entities joining the growing rosters of members nationwide attracted to its social direction to be pursued during their new board incumbency.

Such gestures should be in flesh and form beyond rhetorics, reams of publicity clippings, self-serving advertorial ads, media spins, and deceit anchored on a cloud of smoke and imagery which hallmarked the practice of public relations and communications management as evolved in the Philippines in recent years.

For the first time since its founding in 1957, the Public Relations Society of the Philippines will have as President a leading Filipino consumers advocate and fighter, with a natural bias for corporate social responsibility and corporate neighborliness, instead of a glitzy play of corporate imagery, riveted on a cloud of smoke.

In his vision for the PRSP, Del Fierro said that henceforth, the basic essential of public relations should be enshrined in the cornerstone of authentic good deeds to enhance corporate integrity, and build a sustaining dam of positive reputation and legacy for any private or public organization and foundation before its defined stakeholders who becomes its partners in national development.

Vic del Fierro Jr., is a veteran PR practitioner with nearly four decades of experience. He joined the PRSP in 1968 when he was then PR director of Grant Advertising, an American ad agency, and handled a slew of Philippine companies and multinational and regional Public Relations accounts in Asia and special projects assignments.

He started his public relations career at J. Walter Thompson (Philippines) in 1965 while still in his sophomore years in journalism at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Santo Tomas where he supported his studies as a free lance journalist (he is a son of an institution in Philippine journalism), and as a PR writer in the public information office of the Social Welfare Administration.

He joined his first Filipino agency - J. Romero & Associates as public relations director in 1971 and made the PR department one of the main stream revenue vehicles with the number of PR clients and projects he handled including Binibining Pilipinas, Bank of America, B. F. Goodrich, Philippine Airlines and Westinghouse.

In his neophyte years in Public Relations, he picked up bits and pieces of valuable lessons and pointers in public relations, advertising, promotions integrated marketing communications, social marketing, political public relations, crisis management and lobbying from respected names in PR, advertising and marketing legends like John Lasley, Felixberto Bustos, Benjo Osias, Domingo Abadilla, Baldomero Toro Olivera, Caring Nuguid, Pete Teodoro, Jose Aspiras, Emcy Cortez, Tinsay, Antonio Benedicto, Ronnie Pasola, Ramon Manalac Rene Bas, Cip Roxas, Javier Calero, Lyle Little, Ernesto del Rosario, Pio Acampado, to name a few.

His extra heavy professional commitment for many years in PR & marketing consultancy, legislative lobbyist, political PR in the Senate, public issue management and consumer advocacy compelled a low profile engagement in the PRSP for many years which included participation in major international conferences hosted by Consumers International based in the UK, the United Nations Conference On Trade & Development UNCTAD in Geneva Switzerland.

The Committee on Trade of both Philippine Senate and Congress has been regularly inviting Del Fierro on various public issues and advocacies affecting consumers in the Philippines. He advocates harmonious balance of common interests to the consumers, management and other stakeholders.

The new PRSP president, a veteran PR practitioner and a free lance journalist since the late 60s is also a public issue lobbyist in Congress, and an internationally acknowledged consumer advocate who gained global recognition when he stood up in behalf of Philippine consumers who were duped and victimized in a deceptive nationwide promotions by a U.S. based transnational food and beverage giant who has been relentlessly avoiding its corporate social responsibility at all costs to thousands of poor consumers for the past 14 years. Del Fierro is an advertising innovator. He introduced Transit Media in the Philippines that specializes in cost efficient high impact advertising in buses, taxis, jeepney, school buses, tricycles in Metro Manila and key cities nationwide.

The other officers of the PRSP include Juan P. Dayang, vice president for external affairs and president and pillar of the Publisher Association of the Philippines (PAPI), Antonio Samson, vice president internal affairs and chairman of the Advertising Board, Ronnie Preza, secretary, Larry Zurita treasurer, Catherine Trumata, auditor, Ulysses Antonio Rivera, director and Wivina Ferrer as director and Noel Albano, deputy secretary general for media of the House of Representatives, director and chairman of the National PR Congress slated in the middle of 2006.

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